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THE
MODISH WIFE,

A COMEDY.

by Francis Gentleman

[PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.]

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MODERN WORLD

ACCOMPLISHED

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K
MODISH WIFE,

A C O M E D Y,

PERFORMED WITH UNINFLUENCED APPLAUSE

A T T H E
THEATRE-ROYAL, HAYMARKET.

Laudatur et Alget.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE STAGE,

As it has been, is, and ought to be.

With Biographical Anecdotes of Messrs. MOSSOP, DEXTER,
DERRICK, and the AUTHOR, *School-fellows*, and public Co-
temporaries.

L O N D O N :

Sold by T. EVANS, Paternoster-Row; and J. BELL, near
Exeter-Change, in the Strand.

THE
MODISH WIFE

A COMEDY

PERSONS AND PERSONAGES

ACT THE

THEATRE ROYAL



TO BE PERFORMED

A SUMMARY VIEW

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E N G L I S H, S C O T S, and I R I S H

S T A G E S.

THE utility and dignity of the Stage, when properly conducted, has never been disputed in any age or nation, by men of liberal sentiments in church or state; some exclamatory blasts of enthusiasm have indeed, at different times, made virulent, yet feeble attacks, some faint remains of these now and then issue *officially* from Tottenham-court-road and Moorfields instructors; but even they only utter invectives to preserve custom and affected sanctity, while their hearers, as well as themselves, laugh at the unnecessary frivolous delusion: the stage should not complain of this abuse, as every institution may be, and certainly is, misconducted as well as misrepresented; indeed as to the scandalous, irrational, and most illiberal Roman act, adopted ridiculously by our legislature, which stigmatizes performers, while not only the matter and manner of their performances have been, and are legally authorized and universally encouraged, it deserves general reprobation and theatrical contempt.

Roscius, *Cicero's* idol, if his profession could be originally deemed bad, should receive no credit from excellence in pursuing an infamous path; as well might a dexterous highwayman claim praise for excelling in actions totally unsufferable.

Some three years since, I publickly invited a bigotted preacher in Scotland, to bring *one* text of scripture in corroboration of his rigid opinions; I asked, if dramatic compositions were inconsistent with strict christianity, why Saint Paul should have quoted from a Greek author in that sphere? with some other pinching interrogations, which appeared unanswerable, and occasioned, what I did not wish or mean, the defection of many subscribers to this person's preaching, a manifest temporal injury to him.

In the course of what I have to offer I shall be desultory, consequently unmethodical; I shall produce nothing which does not, in my idea, deserve notice; but as to arrangement I shall let circumstances and anecdotes fall in as they may, the

more to sport with and amuse attention ; I shall endeavour to pursue *Othello's* rule, and " nothing extenuate," even respecting myself, " nor ought let down in malice," concerning others : while impartiality is my guide I wish to be credited, the moment I pass that line may contempt be my portion, the same contempt I have ever entertained for envy, malevolence, and adulation, three common attendants upon authors, actors, and every degree of public life. A strong symptom of pride may appear in this declaration, but a strict attention to the several degrees of human nature, with many severe rubs, some gleams of sunshine, many self-delusions, more relative ones, and rigid inspection into social connections, have made me, I presume, a tolerable judge of the subject I now enter upon.

From every historical circumstance, we have reason to believe that such entertainments as a theatre affords, could not be in a state of regularity or elegance for many years after their existence : the reformation in its infancy, the grand Spanish invasion, not only threatened but prosecuted ; these, and other succeeding circumstances, all contributed to prevent that justice of exhibition for *Shakespeare's* inimitable productions which they deserved ; no amendment could be expected in the quibbling, sanctified, pedantic, witch-hunting period of *James the First* ; as to the miserable monarch his son *Charles*, his time of royalty was so perplexed, so turbulent, and so fatal to himself, nothing gentle, elegant, amusing, or instructive could possibly prevail : *Cromwell's* prevalence, though a glorious æra for the nation, was very unfavourable, and necessarily so to the drama after the interregnum, if I may so call an admirable and spirited administration of government.

A volatile, and we may add politic monarch came forward, who perceiving a settled gloom on the nation, determined to work a change by introducing the levity of wit, the glare of show, the bait of gallantry, and a general plan of dissipation, to shake off attention from matters of serious concern ; if ever the stage was prostituted it was at this time, amidst a flow of great, of original powerful genius. *Dryden* may stand a proof of the whole, who ranted pompously, enthusiastically in his tragedies, and descended to the lowest, most fulsome stuff in his comedies : however in this reign we may commence the first degree of theatrical excellence as to performers ; and upon a retrospect, we find great uniformity in the cast of plays, as it is phrased, every one, like a good soldier, kept his place, and by not being *misplaced*, we may conclude, made a good figure ; nay, from the best accounts, we are taught to believe so, even the printed dramas strengthen this opinion ; and this is one of the best methods to judge by, both comparatively and decisively, as in examining the present stage here-
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after I will clearly demonstrate. From this period composition and representation have, save the comedies of *Congreve*, *Cibber*, and *Fargubar*, with *Rowe's* tragedies, been improving, I mean as approaching nearer nature; I do not contend for spirit, character, or invention in favour of the present age, but a claim to superior propriety may be justly maintained upon comparison.

The æra of *Wilkes*, *Booth*, and *Cibber*, has been highly blazoned, and there is reason to credit tradition in many points; but from the imitators of them I have seen (who though they had by no means equal execution, certainly possessed their manner) it was offensive to chaste criticism; thus *Quin's* turgid swell was derived from *Booth*, who caught his from *Betterton*; young *Cibber's* caricature grimace, and snip-snap expression, were but the remnants of his father's oddity; and the late Mr. *Giffard's* genteel comedy, which he valued himself upon, was but a costly retail of that formal gentility, which obtained for Mr. *Wilkes* (when full-bottomed wigs, mechanic utterance and stiff deportment were in fashion) general applause.

From their time to Mr. *Garrick's* introduction of nature upon the stage, dramatic entertainments were miserably mangled amidst wretched anarchy and most disgraceful management.

The Irish stage, till Mr. *Sheridan's* assuming the reins of direction, was, from all I have been able to learn, scarce worth mention; in my own remembrance, four *Elrington's*, the most deplorable manglers of dialogue, serious or comic, that ever disgraced a Theatre-Royal, monopolized all the principal characters; the women were perfect mop-squeezers, and the decorations mere puppet-show trumpery: Mr. *Sheridan* laboured for, and in a great measure effected, a reformation; if his execution as an actor had been equal to his judgement, and his general success as a manager been equal to his liberality of spirit, his condescension to performers, and his zeal for the stage, he would have made ere now a very genteel fortune; but being in some points capricious, and rather too fond of rigid exercise of authority, he incurred, at various times, very prejudicial public resentment; and though supported by many friends, he was frequently attacked both by public and private foes, till at length from a ridiculous attachment to court principles, (for he was wonderfully fond of a smile at the castle levees) he drew upon himself a storm which blighted all his fairest hopes, and bore away with it the fruit of much labour and several favourable harvests.

To this gentleman (for whom I shall always entertain a proper degree of respect) I stand indebted for an introduction to the stage, an introduction more like that of a friend than a manager, from whom, had I chosen to stay in his theatre, I

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had reason to expect the most liberal encouragement. Here, to anticipate any biographical manufacturer, who might in future, as actor or author, gibbet me up to the view of posterity, I shall give an impartial narrative of my coming into, and general progress thro' life, which will naturally take in, by connexions, some school-fellows and public cotemporaries, whom I wish to preserve from misrepresentation as much as I do myself.

Without any boast of parentage, suffice it to say my father had the general repute of an honest man, who, without any brilliance of parts, possessed a share of sense to command respect, he had seen much of the world, and from thence laid in a stock of liberal notions; by forty years service in the army, during which time he had seen many coxcombs of fortune, titles, or interest, put over his head, he obtained a Captain's commission; in this station, most unfortunately for me, he died when I was but seventeen, he was blessed with a wife, and I with a mother, who by invariable conduct proved herself a worthy pattern of both characters.

The 23d of October, 1728, gave me to this mortal stage; my state of infancy was most affectionately attended to, and by unremitting care, an imperfect constitution rendered very strong; at ten, or a little after, I was put under the care of Mr. Butler, a clergyman, who kept a grammar-school in Digges-street, Dublin; here my first acquaintance and intimacy began with Messrs. *Mossop* and *Dexter*, both within a year of my age; Mr. *Mossop's* father residing at his rectory, his son Henry was sent to the care of an uncle, who then kept a bookseller's shop, this uncle put him to Mr. *Butler's* school, and lodged him at an obscure butcher's in an obscure market, as I presume for cheapness sake; not very happy in his situation, he frequently, by leave, passed a few days at my father's with me, and being of a grave cast was much liked by all the family as well as myself.

During the space of five years we were inseparable, and, as I thought, that kind of esteem daily grew upon us which seldom terminates but with life. At fifteen I had the misfortune to obtain a commission in the same regiment with my father, the inconveniency of which station I did not experience till the death of my best friend brought it to light; indeed before that melancholy event I began to dislike the school of Mars, which was then, and I am afraid is too much so still, a scene of dissipation and excess, exceedingly dangerous for a young unformed mind possessed of warm passions.

In the year of the rebellion, a camp of 5000 men was formed at Benner's-bridge, near Kilkenny, which tho' a pleasing show, was certainly an idle affair, discipline being in a most relaxed state; our marchings and counter-marchings, our
sweatings

sweatings and our swimmings, were almost as laughable as Major *Sturgeon's* expedition to Acton, Ealing, &c. however we furnished many important paragraphs for the Dublin newspapers, one of which I well remember, though we were but fifty miles from the capital, killed 500 of us by an epidemical distemper, which had never been heard of in the camp; a strong proof of what authentic intelligence those political vehicles convey.

From Bennet's-bridge we returned to Dublin duty, here I found Messrs. *Mossop* and *Dexter* members of Trinity-college; the former complained grievously at the narrowness of his allowance; lamenting his discontent, in a romantic fit of friendship, I gave him my commission, purposing to accomplish myself for the church; this circumstance he has often mentioned, as I have been informed, however he had not interest to get the transfer ratified by government. From Dublin we were ordered into separate quarters, the company I belonged to was destined for Cashell, neither the Captain nor Lieutenant attending—a pretty circumstance in time of war! the care of a hundred men fell to my share; the route pointed out our way, and we pursued it with commendable regularity, save, as I suspected, the plunder of some hen-roosts; on our arrival at Cashell, a well situated, pleasant, plentiful city, I received a complimentary message from the new mayor, who was that day giving a feast on commencing magistracy, to partake of the festivity.—I attended, was received with most polite hospitality, and found myself immediately acquainted with near thirty leading gentlemen; thus far was well, but it being a kind of custom in that county to drink a visiter's senses away, I sustained a most formidable attack, surrounded by seasoned veterans; at length my prudence, head, and heels gave way, and I fell a sacrifice to Bacchus, but not till three Aldermen and two Parsons had previously fallen prostrate.

This was rather an unfavourable commencement; but during my stay in the place afterwards, I kept rather aloof, and was better enabled thereto by passing much time in the family of a gentleman who had three very agreeable daughters, one of whom, tho' at least twelve years older than myself, had nearly captivated me; however, Cupid perhaps thinking me a trifling conquest, let me for that time escape. Dr. *Price*, then Archbishop of the see, was another strong motive of prevention from excess, for as that liberal-minded prelate very condescendingly gave me a general invitation to his palace, and to ride with him, which took place every fair morning, I was edifyingly drawn from the company of those who prefer hunting and the bottle to every mental enjoyment.

I was not above four months in this very agreeable, and I may add, profitable situation, till my party was ordered to Kinsale,

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sale, where a large number of French prisoners were rather refractory. At Corke I found two hundred of those gentry waiting to be conducted to Kinsale by me, I took them in charge, but never recollected, till we had marched eight miles, that there was not a grain of ammunition in the whole party; however nothing amiss happened.

At Kinsale discipline took place, and the young officers were commendably attentive, but being altogether in a mess we missed one another abominably, both as to expences and constitutions; our propensity to dissipation was considerably increased by the good-natured volatility of Capt. *Henry Boyle Walsingham*, son of the then Speaker of the House of Commons, whose unbounded good-nature, and uncommon flow of spirits, rendered him amiably delusive; and persons who had little but their pay, endeavouring to associate with him, ran into difficulties, which however his generosity, having a large income besides a captain's commission, often removed.

I cannot pay a just tribute to the merits of this young gentleman, taken out of life too soon, as with a few more years, and reflection, he would have been a very compleat ornament of society, and a most valuable friend to his country.

While we were at Kinsale together, an account reached us that liberty was given to raise two regiments for the Dutch service; being tired of a life so inactive in the military view as ours then was, we determined to apply for commissions of an advanced rank in one of those regiments, he promised to take me by the hand, which would have insured me success, and even offered to assist with money if any thing of that kind seemed necessary. The Dutch design being dropped on a view of peace, I was foolish enough to give a hundred guineas for advance of rank in the same regiment, without considering it took me from a station wherein I stood secure from reduction, and placed me in one of the four additional companies, which about eight months after were reduced; here I found myself within the penurious limits of half-pay; I had a right to some freehold property, but being under age could not dispose of it, and was cheated out of the rent, all but a trifle, by a knavish tenant.

Here I flew to the stage, without any great affection for it as a performer, and found a most gentleman-like reception from Mr. *Sheridan*, who judiciously recommended *Aboan*, in *Oroonoko*, for my trial, in which, notwithstanding a most un-consequential figure, and uncommon timidity, I succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations; but this did by no means reconcile me to the back of the curtain, as the spirit of malevolence, envy, and scandal, was hourly invading my ears. A season and a half passed without one symptom of ambition to urge for parts, and at a time when Mr. *Sheridan* had marked

marked out a very reputable cast for me I declined; so precipitate a retreat was in a great measure occasioned by receiving a letter, that an uncle of mine, till then totally unknown to me even by name, had died in the East-Indies, and left me 800l. this gave me a turn for domestic life, as the sale of my little freehold was likely, exclusive of a 500l. mortgage, to produce me 700l. more. When of age, I was advised, that on coming to London, or by sending proper authority, I might receive my Indian legacy; desirous of seeing the English capital I set out.

Here I shall return a little.—During my connection with the Dublin theatre, I received a letter from Mr. *Mossop*, then in London, that he had been drawn from Ireland by the invitation of an uncle, who, as he said, would do nothing material for him; that he had offered himself to Mr. *Garrick* and Mr. *Rich*, who both (the latter is not surprising) deemed him unworthy acceptance, and therefore requested I would mention him to Mr. *Sheridan*; I did, and was informed that a Mr. *Marshall*, with whom we were both intimate, had previously mentioned the matter; I was asked some questions, which I answered with all the friendship and impartiality (my ever favourite principle) would allow. Mr. *Sheridan*, always above envy, gave him a cordial invitation; he came over and had his choice of parts, he very judiciously chose *Zanga*, in the *Revenge*, and displayed in it an astonishing degree of beautiful wildness; his amazing powers of voice were clearly perceived and unanimously approved; his action was what in a great measure it ever remained, forced, awkward, and unpicturesque; his emphasis mechanical and laborious; however, a whole pit full of collegians terrified criticism from any exertion for two nights; and indeed, his merit went so far before his faults, that the encouragement, tho' enthusiastic, was right.

The same week which produced Mr. *Mossop* to public view, furnished the stage with another very considerable ornament, Mr. *Digges*, who had been an officer; a young gentleman furnished with very agreeable and essential requisites, such as a graceful person, a comely countenance, marking eyes, and a full-toned, distinct, tho' not harmonious voice.

These two competitors set off in the race of fame nearly together, and emulated with becoming spirit; however, Mr. *Mossop*, both in diligence and powers, rather outstripped his competitor, tho' Mr. *Digges* has since shown himself a much more general performer. By so powerful a reinforcement Mr. *Sheridan* had a brilliant season, nor did he, as has been practised since, bind rising merit to a kind of an apprenticeship, upon penurious terms, he rewarded them liberally, and brought them forward with rapid speed.

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A ludicrous instance of Mr. *Mossop's* capricious haughtiness may, out of many, be produced; after performing the part of *Zanga* three nights, he chose *Richard* for a fourth appearance, and most unaccountably dressed the character in puckered white sattin; Mr. *Sheridan*, very justly observing that it had a most coxcomby appearance, the remark reached Mr. *Mossop's* ear, who next morning went to the manager's room, and most emphatically addressed him thus: "Mr. *Sbe—ri—dan*, I hear you said I dressed *Richard* like a *cox—comb*; that is an *af—front*; you wear a sword, pull it out of the *scab—bard*, I'll draw mine, and thrust it into your *bel—ly*." This furious attack was smiled off, and had an amicable conclusion.

A circumstance here strikes recollection painfully, which is, that success, in less than a month, raised my school-fellow so high on tragedy-stilts, that a most ungracious reserve prevailed in his deportment, and even to me he was the great man tho' civil. Tho' I ever admired merit, and respected pre-eminence, I never did, nor never will, idolize either; this he wanted in both respects; I would not flatter, my friendship forbade it; he grew shy according to the dictates of his pride; thus fell gradually into decay, what I wished, a permanent friendship. I may have been too ready to catch offence, but he certainly was too ready to furnish cause; I was rather concerned at such a divorce of an early regard, yet I believe we still entertained good wishes for each other, and am willing to stile it the jarring of two oddities, who had not forbearance sufficient for each others foibles.

This supposed defection of a friend hastened my expedition to England; I reached Chester at a time when Mr. *Macklin* had brought an excellent company to that city, knowing several of the members, and wishing to know others, I protracted my journey a matter of three months, which passed pleasantly and rationally, save too great expence, loss of time, and a near chance of matrimony, which would then have been peculiarly indiscreet. One leading defect of my disposition has been procrastination, which has operated most powerfully; however I was not totally idle, for during my stay I altered *Ben Johnson's Sejanus*, which I shall speak of in future. Just previous to setting off for London, Mr. *Derrick*, another early acquaintance, pursued my steps, not liking the avocation he was placed to, viz. that of a linen-draper; very bare of cash, and little acquainted, I was obliged to stand forth for him, which I had great pleasure in doing.

Soon after coming to London, for sake of better air, I took lodgings at Richmond, Mr. *Derrick* remained with me there near a year, and was most of the time using his admirable talents for pushing into an extensive acquaintance, while I, waited with philosophic patience, tho' not proper æconomy, for

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for my expected legacy, passed most of my time in reading and the employment of my pen. A strong degree of theatrical frenzy having seized poor *Derrick*, who, contrary to all common sense, and void of every executive requisite, would make a stage attempt; in friendly compassion I prevailed on him to assume a character wherein his diminutive and deformed figure would not be so laughable; he, in consequence murdered *Gloster* in *Jane Shore*, and I believe convinced himself, as well as the audience, that he could never be bearable, for I recollect no similar attempt—well for the stage if many others had followed so sensible an example!

During my stay at Richmond I published the alteration of *Johnson's Sejanus*, and from a connection my father had with the *Orrery* family, I dedicated it to the late Earl *John*, whose literary abilities, and extreme liberal turn of mind, reflected honour on nobility, and even on the name of *Boyle*; being ever of a distant nature in matters of this sort, I referred presentation of the copy to Mr. *Derrick*, who never was better pleased than when employed in this manner; he brought me a verbal account that my piece was politely received, and that his Lordship wished to see me at his house, then in Leicester-fields; I obeyed the summons, and never experienced more affability or good sense than at this interview: he was pleased to say that I had given *some* marks of genius, but feared, if I should in future shew *much improved* abilities, they would be but of little advantage, for (as he emphatically observed) the fountain-head of critical taste was frozen and benumbed; if you have a turn for politics, continues his Lordship, and will prostitute principle to profit, either for or against administration, some lucrative consequences will doubtless ensue; but if you are an honest principled writer, ten to one but *laudatur & alget* is a proper motto for you: how far I have found this verified I won't pretend to say, but heartily wish I had been fated to use an awl and end sooner than the pen, for nothing but a pensioned defender of government, a lycophant to managers, or a slave to booksellers, can do any thing more than crawl.

In about a week after I had seen Lord *Orrery*, I received from him a letter, with an order on Mr. *Hoare*, his banker, for twenty guineas, and an observation, "that he wished more substantial approbation to attend every future production of mine." After this (the only profit from dedication I ever experienced, and indeed did not expect) I never saw his Lordship.

However, Mr. *Derrick* made such good use of his first visit, that he pursued, and at length—miraculous to think!—drew his Lordship, as well as some other distinguished characters,

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nto a cordial epistolary correspondence. A little after this period, I was saluted with an account that my legacy was arrived and payable; but how was I surprized to find, that three *honest* lawyers here, had, upon perusing my uncle's will, explained away 600l. out of the 800l. I expected; this disagreeable stroke precipitated me into fresh dissipation, which shortly narrowed my circumstances much, and occasioned me to accept an engagement for Mr. *Simpson's* theatre at Bath.

Before my expedition thither (under the gothic management of one Mr. *Phillip's*, an old theatrical coxcomb, vain of playing, and covetous of money) I had the pleasure to see both town houses in a very reputable state of performance; but as to tragedy (save some of Mr. *Garrick's* peculiar parts, if I may so speak) Covent-garden was much superior, in comedy Drury-lane claimed manifest precedence; there never was a more masterly performance than *Every Man in his Humour*, from *Kiteley* to *Cash*, every part was supported with a proportional degree of pleasant propriety.

Mr. *Mossop*, who had reached the English stage, had the Dublin audiences approbation cordially, therefore essentially confirmed here; yet though he possessed undoubted merit, some share of what may be stiled good fortune, attended him in both places, for what the Irish *Collegians* began with, animation, the London *Templars* finished with zeal; would he had been as friendly to himself as the public was to his endeavours. Here, as in Dublin, too much ill-concerted expence attended his pride, yet I cannot recollect his circumstances were, at this period, so much reduced as those of some other successful knights-errant of the stage I have known; no intimacy prevailed between us, considerably owing, I believe, to my rigid remembrance of his sudden contemptible exaltation of deportment, and unfriendly precision of conversation, below the idea of a liberal education, and much more so of a liberal mind; however, before leaving town, I paid him a complimentary visit, when he wished me, and I believe with friendly meaning, all possible success.

When arrived at *Bath*, where the campaign was begun, I found a very imperfect odd jumbled crew, and according to many of the undertakings I was forced upon, most of my endeavours only tended to make the groupe more ridiculous; for being chiefly in a much varied capital line, I must necessarily have been often capitally wrong; however, in the most unjustifiable attempts, I always met with forbearance, without the aid of a single puff, or any support from personal acquaintances, for I neither sought, nor obtained, above twelve during eight months residence, multiplicity of acquaintance, and especially upon an interested plan, I ever despised.

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So many repetitions of self are disagreeable, but as they are unavoidable, and as what I shall advance can be corroborated or contradicted, by many persons living, egotism becomes less painful, and may be the more credible. Amidst the study of a multiplicity of parts, I wrote the *Sultan*, a tragedy, which was well received, though weakly performed; even Mr. *Quin* vouchsafed to say, it was a tolerable *thing*, but the male performers were mere *sprats* of muffled men; a remark not amiss, for there were several light figures: however, that gentleman, with more than usual condescension, gave me, on my night, two guineas for a ticket, wishing me a better *trade* than a Bath author or actor, “for, says he, the people of “fashion come here only to tiddle water, or game; and as to “the town’s people they understand little save extortion;” two points I found amply confirmed.

The second season I produced *Zaphira*, a tragedy, on the same story of Dr. *Brown’s Barbarossa*, but performed before that gentleman’s piece came out at *Drury-lane*, it was better represented, and better received than the *Sultan*, though with less profit to me. The same season I fitted up an alteration of *Shakespeare’s Richard the Second*, which, though incumbered with too many characters of importance, to be adequately supported by a country company (for such *Bath* might then be called) was also very well received; indeed the performance of one Miss *Ibbot*, the best declamatory actress I ever heard, contributed much to the piece’s reputation. The manuscripts of these two tragedies have, I know not how, been purloined from me.

During summer, between the second and third seasons at *Bath*, I came to *London*, and found Mr. *Derrick* studying law and practical philosophy in that agreeable academy the *Fleet*, where his situation would have been painfully exigent, had not the late Sir *Francis Delaval*, Mr. *Foot*, a Dr. *Thompson*, and, through their assistance, other gentlemen, liberally subscribed for his support, the means of which was placed in Mr. *Vaillant’s* hands, from whom he received it weekly.

Luckily when this supply was near exhausted, I recommended his situation to the notice of a most benevolent gentleman, who served him essentially, as he has me on many occasions. Mr. C—— not only raised him twenty pounds subscription to a volume of poems, but by means of the late *Serjeant Hayward*, got him out of confinement; this pleasing point effected, I went to *Bath*, and there found the company under the direction of Mr. *King*, whose spirited performances drawing better audiences than ever had been known there before, and whose regular, yet mild and gentleman-like management, rendered the theatre much more agreeable than to me it ever had been, and to the proprietors much more profit.

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Departing from *Bath*, I shall omit several excursions made to places of less note, and only observe, that during a year's vacation from dramatic connections, I had an opportunity to see the *London* stages in their meridian glory, and a very noble emulation carried on with great spirit and ability on each side; the uniformity of each cast, filled by persons devoted to a particular department, was now strictly adhered to; the managers did not then play the game of cross and pile as they do now, nor make what is head one night tail another; the policy of this scheme I shall presently elucidate, as also endeavour at showing its manifest detriment to the stage in general, and hackney'd drudges in particular.

Having received an invitation from *Edinburgh*, I went thither, and met there, on my arrival, an extreme disagreeable disappointment; Mr. *Digges* and Mrs. *Ward*, two very popular favourites, instead of joining the company, as was expected, decamped to *Dublin*, leaving nothing to apologize for them, and reduced me to the same disadvantageous state I was first in at *Bath*, obliging me to take a porter's load on a school-boy's back. Judge of my regret when I was obliged to march on, with a very insignificant figure, the first night in *Othello*, and the second in *Hotspur*, parts I would ever have wished to decline; after all I met indulgence, and the season for six weeks, during which time I had the misfortune to be acting manager—a most disagreeable station!—went smoothly on; at length, considering some friends I had brought to the company (and without whom it would have been truly deplorable) ill used, I resigned, with secret joy, the reins of painful government, painful, except where a thirst of power, even in a pageant state, stifles delicacy of feeling. Several theatrical manœuvres were practised to make me uneasy, but finding me vulnerable only thro' the sides of my friends, I was so closely attacked that way, that an entire breach ensued; and at the end of the season I parted with the managers, as they filed themselves, on terms not the most polite, however I was well pleased to get rid of such a disagreeable shuffling connection, and wishing to see *Glasgow*, a city I had heard much of, I went thither without any public view.

The place, upon examination, answered the description I had heard of it, in the disposal of streets, and elegance of buildings, as well as in briskness of trade and opulence of merchants. I was unexpectedly invited, by some gentlemen who had seen me in *Edinburgh*, to stay a few months, and assist some persons of respectable families in the proper pronunciation of *English*; some gentlemen of the university soon after applied to me for the same purpose; I undertook the task with some reluctance, but at length went through it pleasingly and profitably. Just before my departure, it was intimated to me,
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by persons of some influence, that if I would settle there, it was more than probable, that a professorship for English oratory might be obtained for me, with a settled salary, and the advantage of pupils, which I make no doubt would have turned out a comfortable establishment; yet, strange is the mind of man, tho' from early years I had wished for a calm retreat, now a very eligible and practicable one appeared, a sudden wandering seized my brain, and I *would* set off for *London*; but not without returning warm and grateful acknowledgements for favours received, and those proposed.

From *Glasgow* I went to *Carlisle*, over a country rather wild, but good road rendered it agreeable; at *Carlisle*, which is a pretty little agreeable city, peopled with genteel affable inhabitants, but not much enriched with trade, I expected a remittance from *Ireland* thro' *London*; I waited a fortnight with patience, then received information that my draft had been evaded; highly chagrined at this, and being ever more prone to revenge injuries on myself than other people, I precipitately, in the heat of vexation, joined a company of *Thespians*, then exhibiting there. This is the only scene of real theatrical wretchedness, both as to performance and finances I ever met, indeed from the former nothing of the latter could be expected; however I was only a pitying spectator of surrounding woes, for some remains of cash, and a tolerable benefit, brought me through bareably.

By means of the philosophy I always possessed, upon a little reflection, time would have passed agreeably enough here, had not sympathetic feelings for the penury around me rather encumbered it; two men of the company were rational and well behaved, my landlord Bonifate had a smart prattling agreeable daughter, and there was lodged in the house a very affable young French prisoner; by these, with two or three honest blades of *Cumberland*, my mind, though not improved, was innocently, and often chearfully, relaxed.

At the end of five weeks, I received an invitation from Mr. *Whitley*, whom I heard of as, and found to be, a reputable, bustling, judicious manager, also a good actor in his line, out of which the state of his company often forced him, and perhaps sometimes inclination; yet this admitted, it is only what much greater performers have been guilty of; many considerable towns have been, and are much indebted to him for regularity, good dresses, and as suitable decorations as they could expect; he also deserves praise for sustaining the stage with spirited resolution against much malevolence and many oppressive attacks.

I took the road to *Scarbro'*, which place, as I said there only a week, I should not now have mentioned but for the following ludicrous affair:

On

On my road thither, I set up at a small house, in a small village called *Kirkleatham*, here I fell in, for want of better company, with half a dozen farmers, and some servants of Mr. *Turner*, lord of the manor ; as it has been always an invariable rule with me to conform to the humours of every *strange* company, as one method of knowing the general disposition of mankind, I said as they did ; this conformity, pleasing even to brutes, with some compliments on Mr. *Turner*, obtained me the titles of honest fellow, hearty cock, &c. accompanied by several slaps on the shoulder, and squeezes by the hand, which, from their roughness, I would most gladly have excused ; however this social sunshine did not last long, for happening to pull out my handkerchief, a piece of paper dropped, on which a person had traced out my road from *Carlisle*, and specified the towns, to prevent my mistaking a due direction ; from *Sunderland*, to the place I have mentioned, is all on the sea-coast.

Happening to go out of the room, this paper was picked up by one who, for a miracle, could read ; they had, while I saw my horse dispatch a feed of oats, laid their politic noddles together, and, as I found, had discovered me to be a *French Spy*. On coming in I perceived looks of great distance, consequence, and curiosity ; silence reigned for about a minute, when my making the trite observation that it was a right *English* meeting ; “ Look ye there, says the one-eyed clerk of the parish, did not I tell ye, neighbours, there are *French Papishes* about ; ” “ ay, says another, turning to his right-hand man, I told thee, Giles, the pig-tail was suspicious, ” and doft see what a skeleton it is—he never eat beef or plum-pudding in his life.”

Not by any means comprehending these disjointed remarks, I applied to my landlord for an explanation ; who said, “ we all suspect thee to be a *French Spy*, tho’, for my part, I can’t say but you have called for supper like an *Englishman*, and drank like one ; but our parish clerk and school-master, and the rest of the neighbours, suspect you to be what I have said ; now as I am *constable* and magistrate, d’ye see, in his worship’s absence, who is gone to *Richmond* races, I must look sharp ; ” “ Right, Mr. *Constable*, says a smart prig in a green coat and coachman-like wig, ’tis time to be wigilance, I was born a cockney, and know that there man is as sure *French* as I sit at this here table ; I have a right to be cunning ; a’ant I groom to a Justice of Peace ? ” and was’nt I whipper-in to the *Lord Chancellor* ? sure I should know law.” In warmth I exclaimed, whip the *Lord Chancellor* and *Squire* too, for having such fools as you about them.

High

High treason was now echoed thro' the room, for calling, as they said, the *Chancellor* and *Squire* fools; the wife and patriotic company here, after giving solemn charge of me to my host, retired with no small apprehensions in their countenances. My supper now approached, and rather laughing upon recollection at so ridiculous an affair, I sat down to it with good appetite, asking my landlord to partake, who, with the resolution of a *Cæsar*, joined me in the attack, declaring he did not think I would do him any harm.

My room being guarded all night by a couple of stout labourers, who first searched my pockets, and pilfered, as I found afterwards, two very good razors; in the morning I was conducted on horseback, for there was no justice nearer than eight miles: this was the first, and indeed the last time, I was ever admired by females for my beauty, but they, I suppose, thinking the rope about my neck, where e'er we passed, pitifully exclaimed, "he's a likely weel far'd mon; 'tis a pity of him, I hope as how may get off;" on our road too, the tender-hearted constable, with a most solemn face, told me it was a pity that men should be hanged, but it could not be helped, and advised me to prepare for the worst; I have a regard for you, says he, for you made me a good reckoning.

When we came before the justice, at a place called *Ayton*, or vulgarly *Yatton*, the matter was settled at once, by my showing some letters I had about me, particularly one from a gentleman whose person and hand-writing he both knew. After a sharp rebuff, and some severe strictures from his worship, upon the constable's ill-timed activity, we departed; Mr. *Longstaff*, with all the penitence and politeness which defeated vermin of the law are capable of, declared that we must not part till we had drank friends, I rather declined this ceremony, but complied to save worse trouble; half a crown's worth of punch was called for, with some cold beef, &c. &c. several ludicrous observations passed from my companions, among the rest, my landlord declared, "that unless I would drink a glass of forgiveness to the parish clerk, who had caused all this, he knew the poor man so well, his conscience would not let him sleep for putting an innocent man in the way of hanging; for, continues he, if his worship had been as foolish as we folks of *Kirkleatham*, who knows what might have happened?"

Our repast over, and a general forgiveness both for soul and body offered on my side, my rejoiced conductor paid the reckoning; I offered to be *Yorkshire club*, but, with a side insinuation, he told me, it was not out of *his pocket*, the *parish* should pay it, ay, and *his time*, the attendants, horse-hire, &c. which, when we have another half-crown's worth, says he, will

will make up about forty shillings—I know how to make up a constable's bill. After two glasses of the second bowl I departed, without a grain of resentment, and I dare say my friends staid, at the *parish expence*, till they were as happy as princes.

Having observed that I should, at present, only make bare mention of *Scarbro'*, let us pass at once to *Manchester*, and open to view a convenient, though not an elegant theatre, with a very good apparatus, and a tolerable company: the season was successful beyond my expectation, the performers were cordial, (easy circumstances promote good humour) the town's people were affable and social; indeed I never met with more ease amidst opulence, more industry with less selfishness, or more critical taste with steady judgement, than in this flourishing mart of trade; (the great capital excepted) the audiences are liberal without levity, and good-natured without weakness.

During the season I produced a *dramatic satire* called the *Mentalist*, which thro' the uncommonly excellent performance of Mr. *Ryder* (now a *respectable* manager, and deserving actor, in one of the *Dublin* theatres) met a truly favourable reception, and rendered me pecuniary advantage.

By the scandalous artifices of a person whom I had essentially served at *Barb*, by tittle-tattle misrepresentations carried to both sides, near the close of the season, a difference, somewhat serious in its nature, arose between Mr. *Whitley* and me; from what I soon discovered, I found, and acknowledged then, as I do now, that he behaved with spirit and candour, while I proceeded with censurable impetuosity, though I believe no animosity remained on either side. At the conclusion of the season I left his party, determining again for London.

I shall now, for some time, drop myself, to pursue Mr. *Moffet*, and the general circumstances of the stage.—In the theatre both male and female performers are, in general, the most discontented mortals breathing, the top want to be higher, and the bottom want to be top; I know a performer of distinguished abilities (no matter for his name) who, four and twenty years ago, lamentingly told me, that he had but one guinea and a half per week; “now, continues he, if I could “but rise to four guineas I should reach my utmost ambition.” This same person, by some happy requisites, and about seven years practice, without a grain of diligence, attained to twice the extent of his wish, yet was then as poor, or poorer than when he first complained; he has since trebled the advantages of his first idea, yet though he may live more luxuriantly, I cannot learn that he either has, or ever had, much money to spare.

A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE STAGE. 17

Discontent is the most irrational, yet the most common, perturbation of human nature; it invades the wisest as well as the weakest, and wherever admitted turns philosophy headlong out of doors; somewhat of this having invaded Mr. *Mossop*, and occasioned him, when well established with the *London* audience, when possessed of a salary, and other emolument, more than sufficient for every reasonable, and some refin'd enjoyment of life, considering him as a single man, without one matrimonial wish in his heart; when treated, as he since told me, with great gentility by Mr. *Garrick*, transported himself, I may justly so phrase it, to *Ireland*. Let it be observed, that Mr. *Barry* and Mr. *Woodward* acted on the same *wise* plan; but as the latter exhibited his penitence publicly, and the former, I am told, recollects his splendid but impoverishing reign, with sincere inward compunction, we'll cast a shade over the whole lavish blunder: *Dublin* was never made for two theatres, nor ever will properly support that number, *one real* good company rather bears hard on the theatrical finances of that metropolis, for what avails general spirit without money to support that spirit.

Hence Messrs. *Barry* and *Woodward* who had money to lose, lost it; and my old school-fellow, who had little more than public merit and private character to sacrifice, impaired both very much. During the greatest part of his mock monarchy he was but ruler of a crew not much above the mendicant tribe; if he had pompous dresses for himself, an unlimited round of characters, some quality acquaintance, (who stripped him of more by private gaming than they served him in public) and the free exercise of his own infallible opinion he was happy, though hourly solicited by starving actors, and daily watched by keen-scented bailiffs; he prostituted native honesty, which I am sure he possessed, to insuperable pride and immoveable obstinacy. When the disposal of parts was in his own power, thinking the *king's* name a *tower of defence*, he undertook as many things out of his way as he did in it, hence, in the general view, he resembled a man who wears a suit of cloaths of contrast materials, look at his right side he is velvet and elegance, turn to his left, he is coarse frize, which tho' warm and convenient is offensively misplaced.

For some seasons this unhappy, and in the main, *great* man, maintained painful, unprofitable, and perturbed authority; he was all through an entire slave to his passions, and most part of the time a prisoner to his circumstances; and he who thought one half, if not all mankind, beneath him, could, for occasional forbearance, bribe and truckle to the most contemptible rascally set of the human species—need the word *bailiffs* be added.

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However

However paradoxical this may appear, it is certainly true, and shows how very contradictory the human heart is often to itself; after toiling through much more than I am able, or think necessary to relate (*outlines* of misery are sufficient) he was seized with a malignant fever, which, unfortunately for himself, and I may add for all his well-wishers, did not take him off, yet shattered his constitution so much, that, to my immediate knowledge, he could never have made in public a figure equal to his original abilities; of this I shall mention more, and more properly hereafter.

My next trip from *Manchester*, was to join a company, as it was called, of kidnapped comedians, picked up from *London*, *Dublin*, &c. led by one *Bardin*, a noted adventurer, who, without any consent obtained from the magistrates, most ignorantly and impudently intruded himself and unhappy Co. upon the town of *Liverpool*; where the *wise* Mayor had, at that time, conceived a *wise* prejudice against theatrical performances, why or wherefore he knew not, but power is power however used. A set of people, who innocent with regard to their general intentions, were decoyed there by threats of prosecution, curiously fabricated in the chicanery of law; the performers were not only intimidated, but their finances were so much reduced, that they neither knew how to return, or how to stay upon *honest* principles; indeed, I believe two or three were capable of *any* retreat, not possessing the last-mentioned ingredient.

The principle of self-defence, in the first place, and a social concern for persons trepanned into a premunire, made me strike out a rational evasion of that childish, or rancorous law, which makes that in common prosecutable, which a *Royal Patent* can sanctify; my scheme was, to file, and to occupy the *theatre* as a school of *Oratory*, for the explanation of moral and practical philosophy, both according to the ancients and moderns; to render this plausible, and indeed incontrovertible, as to both law, equity, and common sense, I gave before each of the pieces, a short introductory lecture upon the general subject and tendency of the play; a point not amiss to be practised here, instead of farcical unmeaning prologues.

For six or seven nights that we performed, our little hovel was filled, and every thing bore a pleasing prospect as to profit, nor did any storm immediately threaten our quiet; but Mr. Mayor—a wonderful man! thinking the territory of his jurisdiction was invaded, *determined* (sense or no sense) to suppress the same kind of entertainment in winter, which, at a most improper season (the summer) he was an encourager of: to say a disagreeable truth, it was, on good authority, reported that the *London* company, who had been excluded that summer, had interposed to effect our exclusion, which took place
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accordingly, but not in the ungentle tyranical manner designed by our adversaries; for sorry am I to say, that the late Mr. Holland, going from *Manchester* to *London*, took *Liverpool* in his way, and offered liberally to lay a gentleman, who told me of it, five guineas, that the *itinerants*—what was he at the time? would all be *stop'd* (his polite phrase) in less than a week. He was deceived in this point, and would have been in the whole of his expectations, had not a miserable illiterate wretch, who has since played at *Drury-lane*, on being interrogated *how he lived*, answered, *by the stage*; which was equally mean and false, mean as he had been instructed otherwise, and false, as it was impossible he could *live* by what he in no shape understood.

On the day before our defeat (from the above paltry explanation) took place, our valorous manager, ever renowned for being the first in, and the first out of a scrape, secreted himself, as I was credibly informed, in a coal-house; and a person, who now fancies himself the paragon of actors—oh dire necessity of the stage!—sculked out of town, accompanied by a flimzy female, his *then* wife.

The noble group of heroes and heroines dissolved, some scrambled back to *London*, with this small difference of carriage, that several who came down in the coach were glad to return in the basket; others swam upon credit to *Dublin*; while Mr. Hurst, of *Drury-lane*, and I remained; we gave two or three lectures, were indulged with genteel audiences, and put some essential pounds in our pockets; I also delivered two for servants, as they are stiled, of the company, who I understood to be penniless; they were, by this effort, to my very great satisfaction, decently relieved; thus ended an expedition, well conceived, miserably conducted, and pitifully marred.

From this mingled scene of laughter and woe I went to *Chester*, where I again met Mr. Whitley; having several cordial and respectable friends in the city, I resolved to pass some time there as a private visiter. At my leisure hours I wrote the *Modish Wife*, and though I had no connection with, or emolument from the company, I gave my manuscript to the manager to use if he chose it; he received the offer politely, and got the piece up with care; it was very well performed, and most kindly received for four nights, though full three quarters of an hour longer of performance than in its present state; Mr. Hurst, who did a material part, can testify this.

During my stay I also pieced together a little interlude, calculated for an admirable set of children, called the *Fairy Court*; this trifle was so excellently presented, so indescribably supported by the little ones, especially by one Miss Wheeler,

not then eight years of age, that it ran fifteen nights (all benefits) a circumstance scarce ever known in a country town, save in the case of the *Beggar's Opera*, when it first came out; I don't mention this any further in praise of myself, than in furnishing ideas which the children so aptly conceived, and so excellently expressed; besides, I had novelty on my side, as so very young a dramatis personæ had never been seen there.

At this period, being near *Dublin*, I was much inclined to visit my native soil, but a fresh and material disappointment irritated me to a new theatrical expedition, to which I was the more readily induced by the formation of a new company, set on foot by two persons I wished extremely well; I joined the infant society, which was very regular, cordial, and respectable in private, though there was not much stage merit to boast of; I made a tour of twelve months, and though some rubs interrupted us, yet I had the pleasure, at parting, to know that my friend Mr. *Bates*, then sole proprietor, was, if not quite, very near established, indeed a few months proved the matter: he has since maintained a very advantageous circuit in *Yorkshire*, wherein from his complacent disposition, good regulations, and punctual honesty, he has acquired universal esteem, and I heartily hope a comfortable competency; no man deserves it better, either as a conductor of a theatre or as a member of society.

It may seem odd that I make particular mention of persons little, if at all known here, but I shall always be glad of acknowledging worth when and wherever I find it.

Having, by my own desire, and on the utmost terms of friendship, quitted this connection just when profits began to be considerable, I went from *Scarbro'* (a place like *Bath*) made up in the summer of fantastical people of quality, and ravenous tradesmen, who prey on them, let me except however the sea-faring part, who are blunt, hospitable, and sincere.

I now went, once more sick of public life, to an agreeable and reasonable market-town, about twenty miles from *York*, called *Malton*, remained there a year, and married a most deserving female—excuse a sigh and tear to her loved memory—I remained in this domestic retreat four years, and experienced from the inhabitants (save one with whom I had some dealings in the *bill way*) very kind friendly treatment, as also from some leading gentlemen in the neighbourhood. During my residence here, I wrote a thing in two volumes, called a *Trip to the Moon*, which had uncommon praise in that part of the world, and was not severely treated by those critical dictators, the Monthly Reviewers, yet the success of that publication was no way considerable.

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My pen was next employed, by advice of a gentleman, consequential in fortune and connexions, in composing a set of fables for his ROYAL HIGHNESS the PRINCE of WALES; the work was perused and approved by several acknowledged judges; it was corrected and published under the inspection of a gentleman here, whom I should think it an honour to name, were such freedom consistent with delicacy; it was dedicated, by *permission*, to his ROYAL HIGHNESS, was presented and graciously received: I had, in consequence a very polite letter from a Lady of Quality, eminent in her station at court—but further on this point we say not.

After this moonshine gleam of advantage had passed over, a fresh prospect, the more agreeable as unexpected, started up, I mean the patronage of that justly and generally lamented friend of his country the late *Marquis of Granby*. A gentleman, who knew my father's and my former situation, recommended me to his Lordship, shewing him, at the same time, some of my productions; the consequence was, that he would provide *comfortably* for me, a promise I had afterwards from the *Marquis's* own mouth. Near twelve months I waited in pleasing expectation, then came to town, and had not been above a quarter of a year, when death, my frequent friend in such cases, before and since, robbed me of my foremost hope, and a favourite son in the same day.

With essential philotophy I looked forward and endeavoured to avoid casting a glance behind, notwithstanding a peevish state of circumstances urged perturbation; at this time I waited on Mr. Foote, who had the following *comedy* (recommended by the late Sir *Francis Delaval*) two years in his possession; he waved bringing it out, pleading the insufficiency of his company to do a five act piece.

In lieu of rejecting my piece, Mr. Foote very kindly, and then conveniently for me, offered a summer engagement, which I gratefully accepted, played, and was, without any agreement, gratified by Mr. Foote's generosity, with a salary, which according to the state of his *theatre*, and the little trouble performers have there, beyond my own opinion. With this gentleman I passed three agreeable and advantageous summers, an expedition to *Edinburgh*, one of the intervening winters was, though pleasant, rather a ballance against me, as I took no benefit; however renewing some valuable acquaintanceships, and having the pleasure to see a great improvement, not only in the city, but in customs, manners, and critical taste, I by no means lamented pecuniary deficiencies. During my connection with the *Haymarket* I fabricated two after-pieces, the *Tobacconist* and *Cupid's Revenge*, which were exceedingly well received, yet again *Pill Garlick* received but trifling advantage. March 1773 most fatally deprived me of a companion

nion equal to every idea of matrimonial happiness, whose loved memory no revolutions, fortunate or adverse, will ever efface; great indeed have been the prejudices of mind and circumstances, accruing from this very fatal and most unexpected catastrophe, health, recollection, and every mental exertion were for some months thrown into absolute confusion.

About a *fortnight* before Mr. Foote's theatre began, I was struck with an information that he had no more occasion for my assistance; this, at a time of peculiar embarrassment, embarrassment known to the manager, was what I could not at that time account for, nor have I to the present moment a single idea of explanation.

Notwithstanding I was thus unaccountably detached from a place my warm wishes, and utmost endeavours were attached to, I wrote intentionally for Mr. Weston, the *Pantheonites*; how that piece, written in four days, and sent into the world without a procured friend to support it succeeded, is too recent a circumstance to repeat; here I cannot help remarking on a ridiculous custom of *authors* reading their pieces to the performers, this is giving a false consequence in general to the former, and is making mere machines of the latter, unless such instructors as Mr. Garrick and Mr. Foote step forth; the former from his extreme intimacy with nature, and from adequate power of expression, must give useful striking ideas even to the happiest natural conceptions; the latter, having a very bold singular caricature imagination of character, is indispensibly necessary for the exhibition of his *own* pieces; but after all, it is to be wished that the *instructed* did not catch up the *peculiarities* instead of the *beauties* of the *instructors*: it may be advanced that an author best knows his own ideas, I grant it intellectually, but expressively makes a wide difference; I have known some *write* very tolerably who could not read decently, and I have heard parsons preach very good *borrowed* sermons, who could not write a paragraph fit for a school-boy's theme.

The season before my separation from Mr. Foote, I was astonished by a most friendly line from Mr. Mossop, wishing to see me at an appointed hour, at Forest's Coffee-house, Charing-cross; though so long at a distance I punctually and cheerfully attended; he received me *like* and I hope as a friend, talked of his theatre in *Dublin*, asked my connection and salary with Mr. Foote; I gave him faithful information; he founded my inclination for *Dublin* in a theatrical capacity; and suggested not only my assistance to raise recruits but to accept the stile of manager-depute; I declined all but the recommendation of some performers, and even there told him I supposed they would expect collateral security for payment of their salaries; here the great man broke out in the syllabled utterance of the word *se-cu-ri-ty*; however I sent two of diligence and merit

merit to him, warning them of his situation, as I never chose nor ever will be a kidnapper in any shape; his being arrested put an end to the negociation. Two days before he got into *salva custodia* (a circumstance I very sincerely lamented) in a *tete a tete*, I asked him why he did not close with one house or the other *here*? he observed that Mrs. Yates was the only theatrical lady who could play consonantly with him, that she was then at *Covent-garden*, and as there was a particular reason why he could not properly be where Mr. Colman was manager (the reason I don't chuse to relate) he was indifferent about engaging: I then suggested his obtaining, which he certainly might have done, licence for six nights at Mr. Foote's, after the season, by which I told him he might at least get 500*l.* and if his original powers remained, by presenting himself to public view, might oblige the managers of either house to comply with his terms.

Whether conscious of that natural inward decay, I plainly saw, or rather more plainly heard, or whether through native pride, he replied thus, "old school-fellow and friend, I would not appear at Mr. Foote's theatre in *London* to clear 1000*l.* in the time you mention"—here is a great light thrown on character. After the circumstance of his bankruptcy I saw him not, but heard that he passed his time dependantly in the south of *France*—dismal situation for a proud man! when he returned here I know not, nor did I know of his precipitate decline, however of his penury and obscure death I painfully heard too soon; Mr. Garrick, I am informed, offered to bury him, but an *uncle*, most generously, took that enormous task to himself. Here we place to rest an actor of as great natural powers as ever graced the stage for tragedy, and as great defects as ever cast a damp on merit even in that stile—shall we, in opposition to that charitable maxim, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, enter a little into private character, as I wish to be done by myself, so will I do in this case, with truth and brevity.

As a school-boy he was diligent in study, good-natured, and strictly honest, but rather abstracted; as a member of the college he was tolerably æconomical, free from debauchery and equally attentive as at school; transplanted to the stage he almost instantaneously grew self-sufficient and arrogant, having very little money to command before, and rushing into what I may call a profusion for him, he forgot not only his early friends but even himself, was in short a *Bashaw* off as well as on the stage; on coming to *London* his arrogance rather abated, but success still cherished pride.

As to his connections with the female sex I will say no more than this, that at the age of eighteen he had, as far as I could judge, a just and generous idea of their influence; but commencing

meneing a great man he was intimidated at marriage, fearing any invasion of lordly rule; however, by credible informations he was a dupe to artful females, especially an old noble lady in *Dublin*, who used to make a tolerable audience for her dear *Harry*, as she stiled him, and after the play stripped him at her route of twice what her interest had procured; thus starving actors were deprived of their salaries, and the duped imperious manager was worn out of all circumstances.

Of his management it may be said, he never consulted any thing but self, not so much for gain as selfish vanity; from the whole it may be collected that he had original integrity strongly planted in his breast, that he was by nature a gentleman, by opportunity and assiduity a scholar, by uncommon requisites a great actor, and by particular failings a very reprehensible man; I ardently wish to cast a veil over the dark shades, but as I profess myself really an enthusiast of impartiality, I cannot disguise or varnish; that so little respect was paid by the theatrical word to such an ornament is a reproach to the communities of both houses, save those who attended; but he who lived rich in abilities, went to the grave poor in commemoration, very little consequence to the dead, but shameful to the living.

Great things were proposed respecting the amiable worthy *Dr. Goldsmith*, but the great folks dropped off, and he went to his grave (to their disgrace) silently, as a common ballad-singer after tunes were at an end.

Oh life what are thy strange variations! the idol of to day, either as a man of power or of genius, when breath departs, and that power or genius operates no more, is neglected not only by the multitude, but also by persons who plume themselves on superior, or perhaps inferior abilities; this is an irrefragable proof that all worldly applause, more than a man can conscientiously approve, is contemptible and highly below sensible regard.

Having left *Mr. Mossop* in that final state of liberation from sublunary cares, which we must all by one means or other reach, I shall proceed to a general view of the *London stages*, from my arrival in town six years ago to the present time.

After ten years absence, I found a most dreadful declension of *tragic* merit, *comedy* indeed has not suffered so much; I both heard and judged without prejudice, and grieved I was to find so little room for approbation, most of the faults I had formerly discovered appeared now in an enlarged state, and few very few of the beauties remained; though it would be peevish criticism to deny *Mr. Holland* and *Mr. Powell* capital merit in some views, yet it must be acknowledged that both were very confined; the former should never have uttered a tender sentiment, the latter should have been entirely limited to pathetic and generous characters; *Mr. Powell's Macbeth* was
boyish

boyish to the last degree, and Mr. *Holland* making love was totally preposterous; yet were these two the main props of the stage in a variety of inconsistent lights; death letting fall the curtain of mortality closed their scenes of action.

What remained? Mr. *Garrick* ever excepted, and Mr. *Barry* also, while he has half a leg to stand or hop on.—Mr. *Reddish* steps forth in *Alexander* when *Lyfismachus* is as far, as with credit to himself, or justice to the public, he should go in *that* play; Mr. *Smith* did every thing at the other house, and every thing the same way; Mr. *Cauterley*, another capital-actor, has figured away in *Hamlet* when *Laertes* would rather overload him; Mr. *Brereton* has—I won't mention for his sake what he has done; Mr. *Bensley* went to school or college, as I have been informed, with Mr. *Colman*, so of necessity must be as exquisite in acting as the late manager was, and may be in writing: to say truth, absurd elevation has reduced very good second and third rate actors, into miserable apologies for the first file, and drawn upon them frequent censures they might otherwise have reputably escaped.

I promised to give some light into the *managerial* artifice in making actors so exceedingly ridiculous and metamorphosable; an actor *really* capital is missed by the audience, and therefore will have adequate terms, without being under slavish subjection to the manager; if therefore an hungry appetite for seeing plays, however mangled, prevails through the public, and a man for seven or eight pounds per week is sent on to bungle through principal parts, which, properly sustained, would deserve twice that sum, so much is really, or supposed to be, saved; besides a *stop-gap* of this kind, should he assume any importance, is immediately removed, because next oars may succeed him without any public complaint; thus actors and audiences are brought effectually into the gripe of patentees.

Let us only view comparatively the cast of *one* play as I have seen it done, the *Orphan*; *Castalio* Mr. *Barry*, *Polydore* Mr. *Sheridan*, *Chamont* Mr. *Garrick*; the other view—oh lamentable! *Castalio* Mr. *Reddish*, *Polydore* Mr. *Cauterley*, *Chamont* Mr. *Brereton*; after several instances, nearly equal to this, can complaint be unjust or censure cruel?

It is somewhat odd that female merit keeps much nearer its predecessors than that of the males; Mrs. *Barry*, Mrs. *Yates*, and Miss *Toung* in *tragedy*; Mrs. *Abington*—herself alone—Mrs. *Bulkeley*, Miss *Pope*, Mrs. *Mattocks*, and Mrs. *Green* in *comedy*; with the excellent support of Messrs. *King*, particularly *Woodward*, *Shuter*, *Weston*, *Quick*, *Dodd*, *Parsons* in the sock, deserve a large share of approbation; how could imagination accept, even in most uncommon abilities, such contrasted transitions as follow; one night we see Mr. *Palmer*, who has considerable merit properly applied, exhibiting *Dionysus*, a blustering

tering tyrant, the next *Brush*, a coxcomby valet, now *Tamerlane*, a cool philosophical declaimer, then *Wilding*, a rhapsodical, pert, incoherent, volatile young fellow; observe Mr. *Clinch* at *Covent-garden*, one night stuck up for *Alexander*, and the next stuck up for *Pylades*; I grant the latter much more within his compass than the former; this is annihilating the real talents of performers, it is setting a waggon-horse to run a race, and yoking a galloper into a cart.

Let us suppose Mrs. *Yates* put into comedy chamber-maids, and Miss *Pope* into tragedy heroines, would not the former promote sleep and the latter laughter? beyond doubt—why then should the men be made butts of ridicule? Mr. *Reddish* kept from all violent passions, might be extremely respectable; Mr. *Smith*, more applied to comedy, must be more pleasing; and Mr. *Palmer*, freed from rumbling parts, which he is apt to overdo, might, in his proper place, be a theatrical ornament.

Here a remark occurs—after Mr. *Mossop* quitted the English stage, his original part of *Barbarossa*, which he shone exceedingly in, was supplied by Mr. *Bransby*, a worthy man, and very decent actor in his road; Mr. *Mossop*, with the consequence I have already mentioned, asked an acquaintance in *Dublin*, if he could think “who was his successor in one of his principal parts?” receiving no answer, he imperiously, but satirically continued, “the frigid *Bransby* now represents “*Barbareffa*”; incapable politicians have exposed themselves as ministers of state, and why not actors vainly, mistakenly, or compulsively, render themselves, or be rendered pitiable and contemptible objects.

I could point out a number of faults in decorum and enunciation, but presuming I shall be deemed rather severe for saying so much as I have done, I shall contract myself on these points, and only observe, that in respect of the former, I have frequently and lately, seen the side wings of a chamber continued three or four minutes through a grove, a garden scene, &c. I have seen gothic pillars leading to a summer-house, and wood wings to a hall; I have observed attendant lords and ladies pay no more attention or respect to their principals, than if they were merely leading puppets; I have observed friends assist *Orestes* in his madness without a gleam of concern in their countenances; and even pages neglect the trains of queens, though spreading those royal ornaments is the only purpose they are sent on for, and indeed necessary for a dignified display of figure.

In point of enunciation the blunders are innumerable, and as to emphasis the misapplication incredible, take one instance for all; from head to foot it is now become fashionable, if the words *thou* or *thy* are uttered, to mark them strongly without
any

any doubt of meaning; as for instance, our present tragedy orators, in saying, give me thy hand, though no hand but one is meant, childishly, or rather pedantically, pronounce *thy* hand—*thou* art a villain; this, without comparison, should be directly opposite, thou art a *villain*; but these, and many other essentials, are below the notice of all accomplished infallible performers, who are as repugnant to the tickling of criticism, as a country girl to the approaches of her lover in early hours of courtship.

Action, one most graceful and expletive ornament, is almost totally neglected as to correctness; a needless extravagant misplaced expansion of arms, is substituted for that descriptive and impressive disposition of limbs, which renders the meaning more obvious and delights the view; if the wings of a paper kite (an emblem of some arms on the stage) did not move so invariably, even they would be more diverting.

Among the heroines, a strange exertion of masculine gestures take places, which though it may enforce expression, destroys essential delicacy; there is also a dreadful misapplication here, such as pointing to the ground, or depressing the hand when elevation of the heart or mind is expressed.

Standing further back than where the curtain falls, is another constant and very prejudicial error, as in that situation the voice is devoured, and the features are obscured, nay, sometimes rendered scarce distinguishable; it is also very objectionable for those who do, or apologize for, capital parts, to monopolize what they think the most favourable points of view; thus a great man stands full fronted to the pit, while another character, perhaps of consequence, is obliged to speak with his back three parts to the audience, forming a picture rude and unsatisfactory; characters too, in general, pay too little attention to each other, male and female acquaintances in pit or boxes, too often call off eyes that should be rivetted to the subject and business of the stage.

I have freely, and perhaps it will be thought severely, as I have determined to sacrifice all other feelings at the shrine of truth, exposed the lamentable declension of *capital* merit, it behoves me to give some reason: musical pieces have been a most detrimental alternative, and pantomime, with luxuriant scenery, have nearly swallowed up all regard for intrinsic genius, and smothered every generous, useful sympathetic feeling.

Before I quit this part of my subject, a part disagreeably insisted on, I think it a duty to congratulate the public, the patentees, and the performers, that so dispassionate a regulator is appointed at *Covent-garden*, as Mr. *Hull*, whose head and heart, from particular knowledge, I can safely pronounce capable of ornamenting any station, except that of a politician; there impartiality and liberal feelings are an obstacle; I

sincerely wish, for the credit of the stage, that every performer either would, or was obliged to keep so uniformly within their powers as this gentleman does; I cannot be unreasonable enough to wish every son of the buskin to understand his author so well, that never was nor can be.

Of Mr. Garrick's management, the policy and success have been so long and so universally known, that it will suffice as a proof of his generalship to say, that he has often, particularly of late, gained conquests without many front rank men; sorry are all true lovers of the *drama*, that he has condescended to call upon, as mercenaries or allies, the patched coat, wooden sword, Fete Champetre, &c. there is not a single article of that sort but renders capital acting merit unnecessary; suffer a mourning friend of the stage to utter this lamentable truth with emphatic feeling.

Mr. Foote's institution, extremely peculiar in its nature, is scarce describable, I believe he does not wish it so; if in his temple of Momus, local characters, temporary sarcasms, and biting witticisms, enriched with caricature features and grimace, will do, the whole end is answered; and indeed no place of public exhibition ever answered the purpose so well; let me not here be supposed scanty or churlish of praise, since, according to my own opinion, there is more wit, satire, sentiment, and pleasantry, in the comic productions in this swallow season theatre, than either of the winter ones, considering the quantity of matter produced.

The *English*, *Scots*, and *Irish* stages, viewed as to critical taste, a very short opinion will let in sufficient light upon the whole.

In *London* the audience are judicious, forbearing, and fond of catching beauties, ready to make every allowance, slow to find fault, keen to seize all occasions of applause, tardy to resentment, yet treated properly easy to forgive; they know best what is right, and yet will soonest forgive what is wrong; they are prone to the dignity, but not the malevolence of criticism.

In *Scotland* they well know bad performance, and bear it with inconceivable sufferance in public, yet are sure to remember it in private; and if a public conviction generally takes place it is rigorously enforced: the point of criticism in which they are most judicious is declamation, here judgement holds a very nice scale, and among them would sooner gain applause for a cool deliberate sentiment, well delivered, than for all the enthusiastic rants of *Lee*, poured forth with force; their idea of players, in a private capacity, has been much, but justly vitiated by the misconduct of individuals, who, under public favour and great emoluments, for that place, have shamefully evaded the engagements of honesty. I could name
particu-

particulars but wish to be excused; however, be it enough to say, that those who should have preserved the stage from shame in that part of the world, and had it most in their power, have laboured most for its reprobation.

As to the *Dublin stage*, which has been a most excellent nursery for this metropolis, a variety of storms has assailed it; some owing to proud obstinate managers, others to proud luxuriant managers, and several to proud ignorant managers; to say truth, though they are excellent critics in the *Hibernian* metropolis, yet the warmth of passion occasions unwarrantable prejudice and savage opposition; support is equally violent, and a stranger has exceeding fair hospitable play: they, as well as we here, have been, from vicissitudes and want of leading genius, most miserably off for some seasons, insomuch that not a performer has been thought worth importing but Mr. *Lewis*, who we freely admit a pleasant comedian—keep him out of tragedy his and our good stars!

The taste of *Bath*, in and out of the theatre, is frippery, governed by coxcomby fashion; people of consequence there think dramatic entertainments mere time killing amusement: the box customers are inattentive and insolent; the pit and galleries, made up of their domestics or tradesmen, are submissive and ignorant; if a Lady of Quality commands, (a case common there) that play must be liked. As a proof of profound judgement, a Royal Personage, in my remembrance, bespoke *Shakespeare's As You Like It*, there was a very pleasant *Rosalind*, and a good *Touchstone*, the rest could not be much out of the way; scarce a creature appeared in the boxes till—the glorious farce of *Chrononhotontologos* was beginning, then came the grandees—oh wonderful!—Lord *Chesterfield* among the rest! but it may be easily conceived he politely sacrificed to folly, though it never could be his favourite. What I have advanced of *Bath* may serve all the watering places in the kingdom.

Manchester I have already mentioned as a place of opulence, affability, and spirit, the upper class are not very keen, yet they are very sensible and very candid critics; they would rather praise than find fault, yet they expect somewhat more than bare decency; attention is the chiefest part of their applause, and indeed the best any audience can give; that cannot be obtained by puffing; the lower class, freed from their industrious avocations, are willing to receive relaxation in the most agreeable manner.

At *Chester*, having had many excellent companies from London, and many of the inhabitants going frequently to *Dublin*, there is a capricious opinion prevails, and they are rather to be taken with a Theatre Royal name, than real merit without that very honourable addition; there is much politeness, hospi-

30 A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE STAGE.

hospitality, and friendship in this city, but too much affectation in their criticism.

York is good-naturedly dull; audiences there are remarkable for fixing public regard on individuals, whom they pronounce incomparable; they are a kind of parents to such actors, and maintain them from youth to grey hairs, even against judgment; private character, much to the city's honour, is peculiarly considered, and, when good, is sure to be patronized. Mr. *Wilkinson*, the present patentee, has given, in a few years, much spirit both to the theatre, performers and frequenters of it.

Thus much for the stage—My school-fellows *Dexter* and *Derrick* paid the debt of nature under the age of thirty; the former was placid in public and private life, gave no particular offence or pleasure on or off the stage; he was liberal, a gentleman, and a scholar; an unhappy matrimonial connection breaking his temper broke his heart.

Mr. *Derrick*, when astonishingly chosen master of the ceremonies at *Bath*, without a single requisite for the place, promised a grateful return, and actually began to make it; but being involved amongst ladies of easy virtue, he soon forgot his friend, and sacrificed his unhappy life to the shrine of *Venus*.

As to myself I am still scrambling on the surface of existence, "with more offences at my beck, &c." as to them let some future commemorator set them down, and, if I have any good qualities, join them; from my heart I wish to be treated with the same honest veritable freedom with which I have treated others; if anatomizing my mind, even while living, and anatomizing my body when dead, can render any public use, I freely subscribe to both; one favourable circumstance only, I shall advance, and venture to maintain, that I would in no case, nor upon any view, flatter a monarch, or insult a beggar.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE THE COUNTESS OF
MEXBOROUGH,

AS A DISTINGUISHED CONTRASTE TO THE

MODISH WIFE;

AS A LIBERAL AND JUDICIOUS ENCOURAGER

OF THE DRAMA;

AND AS AN ORNAMENT, NOT ONLY OF

NOBILITY, BUT OF DOMESTIC LIFE;

THE FOLLOWING COMEDY,

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY HER LADYSHIP'S VERY

OBEDIENT SERVANT,

LONDON, JAN. 1775.

17
The AUTHOR.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Sir SCRAPEALL,	- - -	Mr. FOLLET.
Sir CHARLES PRUDENT,	- - -	Mr. DAVIS.
COLONEL,	- - -	Mr. CRESSWICK.
STARBOARD	- - -	Mr. WILLIAMS.
CRAMBO,	- - -	Mr. HAMILTON.
TIMOTHY,	- - -	Mr. LOYD.
FUSEE,	- - -	Mr. FEARON.
Lady BRAINGLESS,	- - -	Mrs. WILLIAMS.
Lady CHARLOTTE,	- - -	Mrs. GREVILLE.
Mrs. BUSY,	- - -	Mrs. ROCHE.
EMMELINE,	- - -	—
RUELLE,	- - -	Miss ATKINSON.

SCENE LONDON.



T H E
M O D I S H W I F E.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

ENTER COLONEL PARAPET meeting FUSEE.

HA V E you deliver'd the cards as I order'd ?
Fusee. Yes, Sir—but the one for Lady
Brainless could hardly gain admittance.

Col. How so ?

Fusee. Why, that formal cautious domestic,
Mr. Timothy, said he would introduce me to his
master, but that honour, from a knowledge of Sir
Barnaby, I prudently declin'd.

Col. For what reason ?

Fusee. Because, Sir, I have no great affection for
bruised flesh, or broken bones.

Col. Ha ! ha ! ha ! a pretty fellow for a soldier,
truly, to be afraid of a feeble old citizen.

Fusee. Ah, Sir, you dont know the force and ac-
tivity of his crab-tree crutch ; besides, this love
silences every other consideration ; and runs us into
as many hazards as war—do you forget our mid-
night adventure, when the great tan-yard dog eased
your coat of a skirt, and was very near pruning
my body of a leg ?

B

Col

Col. All the better, as in war so in love, dangers and difficulties beget glory and pleasure.

Fussee. Very likely, Sir, but to hazard life and limb without hopes of a pension, is to be mere knights-errant.

Col. Patience and perseverance may gain a pension beyond thy utmost wishes.

Fussee. There, Sir, you speak to the purpose; and I hope your honour wont think me the worse servant for having an eye to the main chance; as every day shows us that interest rules all ranks, from the general to the centinel; from the dutchess to the chamber-maid.

Col. True; and you have a right to all the favour I can show, for rescuing me from those whisker'd hussars at Warbourg:—what think you therefore of being provided with a good wife?

Fussee. And a good fortune too, Sir.

Col. Certainly: suppose Sir Scrapeall's sister, old mother Busy?

Fussee. And a sad supposition, too Sir, I think, for if she had lived in Scotland, some century ago, her looks would have brought her to the faggot for a witch.

Col. What I suppose nothing will go down with you but the roses and lillies of youth? don't you know, numscull, that beauty is one of the most fading and perishable commodities in the world? now old Busy, having received most of the injuries that time can do human nature, will be as engaging at last as at first: besides, you need not fear a rival.

Fussee. Really I believe not, Sir, unless the devil himself turns gallant.

Col. Besides, she has five hundred a year jointure.

Fussee. Has she so, Sir? that makes a very great alteration, why she is not half so disagreeable as she was—your honour's humble servant is not so nice,
but

but he can find roses and lillies in the solemn hue of old gold, and the harmony of the spheres from chinking of guinea; sbut, Sir, there's one rub still, if I should make prize of this old crazy galleon, I must try to keep her above water, as the cargo is to sink with her; if I could but keep the gold, and send her to the bottom, it would be making a good cruise of it.

Col. I warrant she has an old chest that will afford good spoil, and I have no doubt of your success.

Fusee Ah, Sir, I must be a dull scholar, indeed, not to have learned from you how to tickle female ears; and the view of a snug retreat, will make me encounter wrinkled cheeks, sunk eyes, toothless gums, and grey hairs, with as much alacrity as if youth and beauty were the prize.

Col. On that will depend your success—mother Sly shall prepare the way for a proper introduction.

Fusee But, Sir, there's another rub we had like to forget—your honour knows that I have been forced to make some advances to Mrs. Ruelle, Lady Brainless's woman; now what shall I do to quiet her? she is a good friend, and may be a bitter foe.

Col. Well observed, she is a necessary agent, and must not be lost; should she know you in your disguise, you must have recourse to your old method of lying; and if that won't prevail, my purse shall produce some irresistible arguments; she is a politic jade, and seems to know the value of a few guineas extremely well.

Fusee Yes, truly, I believe she does, Sir, and tho' possessed of a nimble tongue, can always be silent when interest tips her the wink.

Col. Retire, I see Sir Charles—I shall furnish you with necessary materials, and full instruction after dinner.

[*Exit Fusee.*

B 2

ENTER

ENTER SIR CHARLES PRUDENT.

Sir Char. Colonel, good-morrow, is not my visit unfashionably early?

Col. Not at all, Sir Charles; an agreeable companion can never come unseasonably, save a wench in the case; as to fashion, she is a capricious jade, and below the regard of a sensible man.

Sir Char. How can that be? when no body, in general, pays a stricter regard to her rules than my friend?

Col. you must not imagine that every custom I conform to commands my approbation; but as peculiarities, however rational, are rather offensive to the general eye, why should a man render himself disagreeably wiser than his neighbours; it is a peevish characteristic of age, to idolize the modes of its youth, for my part, I think revolutions in taste necessary; and cannot suppose, that either the morals, or understandings of mankind are injured by a social conformity.

Sir Char. Most certainly they are not.

Col. So far then I am the voluntary subject, but never can become the slave of fashion.

Sir Char. To be free, Colonel, does not this sensible compliance proceed chiefly from the influence of the ladies.

Col. To confess the truth I believe it may; and among us soldiers it is no more than duty; by our commissions we are ranked under the banners of fame and beauty, to render the cause of the former service, and the dictates of the latter obedience.

Sir Char. In which light, you have happily distinguished yourself; and if report speaks true, the ladies have not prov'd insensible to your merit; what fame may do—

Col. Gives me very little concern; she is, an empty airy glittering bubble, as the song says; when my

my country calls, my best endeavours are at her service, but for a mistress, let me have warm flesh and blood; lips to melt, and eyes to fire the heart.

Sir Char. Like those of Emmeline Fairlove.

Col. Right, my friend; what were the glory of an Alexander to possession of such charms?

Sir Char. A mere aerial phantom; but prithee Frank, has that lady had the power to touch your heart in reality?

Col. Touch, why she has shot it through and through with Cupid's arrows; made a perfect riddle of it, and, notwithstanding my love of freedom, I begin to think that matrimony alone can work its cure.

Sir Char. Ha! ha! ha! what the gay, gallant, and universal lover Colonel Parapet monopolized by a single happy fair one? after all, my friend, I am afraid that roving, dissipated heart of thine will hardly bear limitation.

Col. Why so, Sir Charles; when that limitation proceeds from choice; gallantry is a pretty agreeable amusement for some years, at a man's first entrance into life; but like other light appendages of youth, should give place to more serious enjoyments.

Sir Char. So then you have at last determin'd to become a grave, city-like fellow.

Col. Not that neither; a husband may have spirit without running at large; and a wife gaiety without indiscretion.

Sir Char. Dear Colonel, you have perfectly expressed my opinion; should one happy day give Lady Charlotte to my arms, and Emmeline to yours, I have no more to ask of fortune.

Col. Nor I; but you, my friend, have much the nearer prospect: however, fortune favours the bold; and having laid siege I am determined to carry on my operations with vigour; could I but
secure

secure the outworks I should have no doubt of the town.

Sir Char. By the outworks, I presume, you mean Lady Brainless and the amiable Mrs. Busy?

Col. You are right—and sure no mortal had ever greater contrast's to deal with; as to the former, being young, handsome, sprightly, and good natured, it is not a disagreeable point to flatter her vanity; but the old beldam is quite intolerable: however I have warm hopes of getting her off my hands immediately.

Sir Char. By what means?

Col. That you shall know hereafter—the hour calls me at my agent's to sign some accounts; if you'll take a place in my chariot, and accompany me thither, I shan't detain you above five minutes, then I am yours as you please?

Sir Char. With all my heart.

Col. Allons.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

LADY CHARLOTTE meeting EMMELINE.

L. Charlo. Good morning to my dear Emmeline.

Emme. Lady Charlotte, your servant.

L. Charlo. Oh, Emmy, I begin to think quality a sad incumbrance; so much ceremony, such fatigue, and so little society; that inexhaustable spirits, and very pliant reason are necessary to go through the whimsical round, why last night, now, at Lady Ombre's rout, was I obliged to stay till the tell-tale sun rendered flambeaux unnecessary; and had not your Colonel gallanted me most pleasantly, I should have made a very humdrum, pitiful figure.

Emme. My Colonel!

L. Charlo. Nay, nay, don't change colour, child, every honest heart, like yours, speaks through the eyes

eyes, therefore you may as well confess; but you are diffident, and require help in these cases, so let me say for you, that Colonel Parapet is a pretty fellow.

Emme. Dear Lady Charlotte, your cordial regard commands my utmost confidence, and obliges me to acknowledge I have always thought him a man of merit.

L. Charlo. Very well my dear, and when a woman of sense, in the single state, allows a batchelor merit, take my word for it, love is not far off; but I hope you have not betrayed your good opinion to his knowledge; for the men, like us, Emmy, grow vain upon being admired.

Emme. I hope, and believe, no word or action has revealed my opinion.

L. Charlo. So much the better; hope kept at a distance, in the affairs of love, causes a more eager pursuit; there's my swain, Sir Charles Prudent, has paid his addresses to me these twelve months; yet has arrived at no point of certainty; nor do I know when he will; notwithstanding he has an exalted place in my esteem.

Emme. Your Ladyship's caution is the effect of good sense, and I flatter myself with considerable advantage from so prudent an example—oh, I see my agreeable tutoress approaching.

L. Charlo. Mercy deliver us from the nauseous wretch.

ENTER MRS. BUSY.

Mrs. B. My dear Lady Charlotte, your very obedient humble servant; I profess it is such an age since I had the pleasure of seeing your Ladyship, that I quite languish'd to salute you.

L. Charlo. You are infinitely obliging madam—odious creature. *(aside)*

Mrs. B. Emmeline, your sister desires to see you

you—[*Exit Emme.*] and how does your good Ladyship; our little family is never so happy as when graced with your presence.

L. Charlo. Such a profusion of compliments, madam, prevents all reply.

Mrs. B. Your Ladyship flatters me, how should such a one as me that has never been at court but once to taste the Queen's caudle, cope with dear Lady Charlotte; tho' we see some good things in the city—when Mr Alderman Busy was alive I never miss'd the ball on Lord Mayor's day, and I danced with such an air, that Mr. Deputy Stiff-rump always chose me for his partner—I might have been a Lady too, if my husband had my spirit—but its no matter, there are so many paltry creatures with titles now a-days, I give myself very little concern about it.

L. Charlo. You are certainly right, madam, it is better to deserve a title, than to wear one without merit.

Mrs. B. Most infinitely polite—I warrant your Ladyship hears a great deal of news, at the court end of the town.

L. Charlo. Really, madam, I seldom bend my attention that way.

Mrs. B. No! supprizing! we in the city always love to know what stirring—now I talk of stirrings, has your Ladyship heard that Sir John Rampant, carried off sukey Tallow-Cakes?

L. Charlo. Fulsome gossip (*aside*) no, madam.

Mrs. B. Why I believe it has been in the news papers—I dont love to speak ill of any one; but I always said Sukey was a forward minx—I am sorry for the mother, because she is a nieghbour and friend—tho', between ourselves, there was odd kind of talk about her, when she was a girl—as for my part I dont love tittle-tattle scandal—let other people answer for themselves—but one must hear when

when things are talked of—ah, there are sad doings in the world—would your Ladyship believe it, a cousin of my own over the way—but I shant say all I know neither.

L. Charlo. You are perfectly right, madam, your humanity does not at all check my curiosity.

Mrs. B. Nay its no secret, only one does not love to repeat such things but—well—I could have as soon suspected myself, never did she miss church, of prayer days, and twice of a Sunday : yet for all this sanctity 'tis not a week since a gallant was found—as I live ; found in her bedchamber.

L. Charlo. Intolerable tormentor (*aside*) perhaps, madam, there may be more scandal than truth in the story.

Mrs. B. No, no, its true enough—I thought I saw something suspicious a long time past ; but I am good natured, and think the best ; besides, being a relation, your Ladyship knows that—

L. Charlo. I must change the subject (*aside*) pray, madam, has Colonel Parapet visited here lately ?

Mrs. B. Oh dear, yes—we could not do without the Colonel ; he is here three or four times a week, and is always pleased to say he finds more charms here, then throughout the whole circle of his acquaintance besides : oh he's a most engaging sensible man—so grave, so prudent—none of your feather-sculled fops : I assure your Ladyship, the Colonel and I have many a *trate a trate* conversation, as the French call it.

L. Charlo. I shall laugh in her ignorant face—oh, Emmeline comes happily to my relief. (*aside*)

ENTER EMMELINE.

Emmi. Lady Charlotte, my sister begs to see you at her toilette.

C

L. Charlo.

L. Charlo. I attend her—madam, your humble servant.

Mrs. B. Dear Lady Charlotte your most obedient—may I hope to see your Ladyship soon again?

L. Charlo. With the first convenience, madam.

Mrs. B. I shall insist upon it—I shall be quite unhappy till then, as there is not a person upon earth, I more respect than dear, dear, dear, Lady Charlotte.

L. Charlo. You quite overwhelm me, madam.

Mrs. B. Nothing equal to your ladyship's deserts.

L. Charlo. You oblige me to fly—besides Lady Brattle's expects me.

Mrs. B. Since we must part so soon, I am your Ladyship's most obedient humble servant (*curtsies after Lady Charlotte to the door*) what a proud conceited piece of stuff it is—dost you think so Emmeline?

Emme. No, really madam.

Mrs. B. That's so strange now—because madam has got some quality blood in her veins, and wears some trinkumbob jewels, there's no-body so good as her, I warrant; but for ought I know she is no better than her neighbours—it is not for nothing that Sir Charles Prudent has dangled after her, and a swarm of fellows besides; but as the proverb says, a blot's no blot till it is hit.

Emme. Nay, madam, such innuendo's are too severe; for the world allows Lady Charlotte wit, beauty and virtue.

Mrs. B. The world—what world pray? and how come you to know the world; mind your needle child, that becomes you better than to contradict your elders—her Ladyship, I suppose, would make you as great a rantipole as herself, and bring fellows about you, there's her virtue; but I'll take care my brother shall look sharp—go—order a pen and ink to my chamber (*Exit Emme.*) I'll write

write to the Colonel, such a dear man is not to be missed; and when I get him fast, I'll shew the young gill-firts that I can hold my head as high as the best of them. [Exit.

SIR SCRAPEALL discover'd perusing Accompts.

Hum—hum—hum let me see, gain'd by variations of stocks within the last six months, five thousand pounds—ah, a good, a very good article that: this same Change-Alley, to men of true knowledge, is a second Mexico or Peru, what are your Oxford's and Cambridge's to it for education—what, indeed,—but to go on—lost by cargo of the ship Luckless coming to a bad market—fifteen hundred pounds—a terrible article—yet, mercy on us, what are the losses in trade to matrimonial cares—ever since I married this fine, fashionable wife of mine, neither my head, my heart, nor my purse have had any rest—visitors distract my ears, cuckoldom haunts my sleep, and, while I am awake, my forehead feels a constant pain, as if it was breeding horns—well, I have no body to blame for it but myself; I could not be satisfied while I was well, and now—mercy on us!—repentance comes too late—

ENTER TIMOTHY.

now, Timothy, what has all this knocking at the door been about this morning?

Ti. About compliments to her Ladyship, an like your worship; and here is a pack of cards they have left her.

Sir Scr. Pox on their compliments and cards too—gilt edges!—extravagant wretches!—like themselves—fine without—nothing within; eh Timothy?

Ti. To be sure, an like your worship—all that glitters is not gold, as the old proverb says.

Sir Scr. Right, Timothy, right— ah those old proverbs—they are as much beyond your modern wit as—let's see—let's see what nonsensical stuff is written on them—umph!—ay— Lady Fussoc's compliments to Lady Brainless; begs to be excused from her engagement, having got cold returning from the King's Theatre in the Haymarket last night—I'm glad of it—I'm glad of it; and I wish my hopeful wife had got one too, that would confine her to the house these three months—eh Timothy?

Ti. Yes, Sir, that would do rarely, tho', lackaday, Sir, there would be such a croud of nurses, and visiters, and doctors, and surgeons, and apothecaries, that—

Sir Scr. Say no more, Timothy, the horrid catalogue thrills through my blood, like the cold fit of an intermitting—no, no, we'll have no pills, draughts and bolus's, in this house: so heav'n preserve her health—or rake her all together—eh Timothy?

Ti. A very good prayer an like your worship.

Sir Scr. Come, let's see another—Colonel Parapet offers compliments, and—how! what! have I got the military so near my citadel?

Ti. Oh, Sir, that must be the handsome, sprightly young gentleman, in scarlet and gold, that comes here so often.

Sir Scr. A handsome, sprightly young gentleman, in scarlet and gold—three dangerous articles in the way of five and twenty, wedded to such a husband as I am—eh Timothy,

Ti. Very true, Sir—and I am afraid there is something more than common; for last week, as he was going out, I saw him give Mrs Ruelle, my Lady's woman, half a guinea—ay I saw him kiss her, and slip it into her hand at the same time.

Sir

Sir Scr. Did you so, Timothy?—then there's fine work in this family of mine; ah, these confounded red coats—they strip our pockets of money, our wives of honesty, and our hearts of rest—eh Timothy?

ENTER LADY BRAINLESS.

L. Brain. Ruelle, see if the chariot be almost ready—so my dear, you and your prime minister, Timothy, have been in close consultation—ha! ha! ha!—never was master and man better paired; so much wisdom, such gravity; and then for appearance, our sagacious domestic might make a good figure amongst the curiosities of the Antiquarian Society; ha! ha! ha!

Sir Scr. I wish, madam, I had been as prudent in the choice of all my family, as I was in taking this domestic, as you call him.

L. Brain. So my dove, that's a compliment for me—well, certainly no woman ever had a more polished lord and master than mine; and that too, after eighteen comfortable months of marriage.

Sir Scr. Eighteen months of slavery I say—galloping abroad or rioting at home is all the business of the female part of this family—here now are a parcel of nonsensical messages enough to fright reason out of doors. [*gives her the cards*]

L. Brain. Nay, but Sir Scrapeall, in compassion to those delicate features of your's don't frown—

Mrs. Rattlers compliments—I suppose my love you have been perusing these little billets; now was that so polite when they are addressed to me? do I peep into your papers? do I scrutinize your affairs?

Sir Scr. No truly, madam, my purse is the only affair of mine you dive into.

L. Brain. Well, Sir, and that I do for your credit, you love to get money and I to spend it.
how

how could you expect to make a figure in the world, if I was not to give some shining proofs abroad, of your industry at home?

Sir Scr. Very hopeful reasoning indeed.

L. Brain. Most certainly my dear, you act with œconomy, I with spirit; so that our affairs shine forth with respect and brilliance: but I know this is a subject you are not fond of, therefore to show myself a polite wife, I shall give it up and peruse my cards. [*she reads*]

Sir Scr. Mighty condescending truly—so all my comfort for becoming a beggar is that I am made one politely—ay, now madam is in her element—there—smile; that must be from the handsome young fellow in scarlet and gold.

L. Brain. Do you know Colonel Parapet, Sir Scrapeall?

Sir Scr. Ay, I thought as much(*aside*) no, not I.

L. Brain. Oh dear its a great pity, he's one of the most sensible, polite, gallant young fellows about town; a little conversation with him would be of infinite service, and so polish your contracted city notions—positively you shall be acquainted with him.

Sir Scr. Positively but I will not, madam.

L. Brain. Nay, that's so unkind, when the Gentleman is impatient to be intimate with you.

Sir Scr. A cuckold making son of a whore—(*aside*) look you, my lady, few words are best, so in plain terms, I wont have such doings nor such visitors in my house; flesh and blood can't bear them, so determine upon a reformation, or madam—madam——

L. Brain. There is really too much of the *spirituoso* in your expression, Sir Scrapeall, it wounds my ear: had you politely attended our opera's, you would have attained a more melodious modulation; but since you are obstinate, and won't go to

to public places ; what think you my dove if I should engage some of the best hands and voices, to perform once a week in our own room : you know as the poet says——

Music has charms to sooth a savage breast,
To soften rocks and bend the knotted oak,
and who knows what effect it may have upon you, my Adonis, ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

Sir Scr. I am very much obliged to your ladyship, and am glad to see you so merry ; but I'll have no tweedledum, tweedledum, in my house ; if I catch any of the catgut tribe within my doors, I'll try which, their empty noddles or my cane is hardest.

L. Brain. I never knew before that cudgel-playing was an accomplishment for a city knight, ha ! ha ! ha !

Sir Scr. Very well, madam, very well ; but I'll do as I say for all your yah, yah, yah,—music, quotha ! if you are so fond of that can't you go to church, and hear three or four tunes upon the organ for nothing.

L. Brain. Church music ! barbarous ! worse than the sermon ! and as bad as the humstrum of a rustic fiddle at a country wake—what a solecism in taste to mention it !

ENTER RUELLE.

Ruelle. Madam, the chariot is ready—and the Countess of Rantipole is at the door in her sedan ; and desires to speak three words to your ladyship.

L. Brain. Oh dear, I'll wait on her instantly.
[Exit Ruelle] Let me see, I have ten visits to pay, besides calling at Grogram the mercer's, and Dresden the millener's ; so that I can't dine 'till five o'clock---I know that's something late for your city appetite, Sir Scrapeall ; but if you can't wait, your right-hand man, Timothy, can help you to a slice in your own polite way---I have a world of

business, and that must apologize for leaving such delightful company, ha! ha! ha! [Exit.

Sir Scra. Business!---pretty business, truly!---ten visits, besides calling at Grogram's the mercer, and Dresden's the millener; why at this rate my horses will never come home alive, eh Timothy?

Tim. Why an they don't, Sir, its no great matter, your worship need not buy any more, so there will be keeping and a coachman saved.

Sir Scra. Right---admirably said, Timothy!---so let her rattle them out as soon as she pleases---but five o'clock to dinner---well, that's not amiss neither, for a late dinner may save a supper---then this Colonel, this Colonel; I shall have swords flashing in my eyes, and drums beating in my ears constantly; every colour will turn scarlet before me; and tormenting imagination will fortify my head with horns---ah, Timothy, Timothy, what a terrible blunder did I make;

How did I study to procure a curse,---

Tim. The day you said, for better and for worse.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

SIR SCRAPEALL and TIMOTHY.

Sir Scra. **S**O, Timothy, by this letter I find I am like to have another plague shortly.

Tim. Marry, heaven forbid, Sir!

Sir Scra. You shall hear, Timothy, you shall hear (*Reads*) "Brother Brainless, this is to let you know, that after a voyage of twelve weeks, from Jamaica, I cast anchor this morning at Deptford, where I am lying too at the punch house; when I have knocked off a cann or two of my old landlady's grog, I'll stretch right a-head with a merry gale, for Thames-street; and salute you, old heart of oak, with a broadside of affection, which is all at present from your brother, till death, Dick Starboard."

Tim. Mercy deliver us, Sir! this is the West-India captain that used to drink three bottles of rum at a sitting, when he was here last; and gave your worship the gout for three months, by cutting a caper on your great toe.

Sir Scra. Ay, ay, the very same;---and now, I suppose, out of friendship he intends to finish me.

Starb. within) Who's a board, yo ho.

Tim. Strait forward, Sir, strait forward.

ENTER STARBOARD.

What cheer, what cheer, brother Brainless?---Spring my bowsprit he seems in a foul gale; back your sails, heave out an anchor, and bring too with your head to the sea, or you'll be upon the shallows next trip.

D

Sir

Sir Scra. Oh, brother Starboard, I did not see you.

Starb. You might have heard me then, for I hail'd you loud enough for a league's distance; but you land-lubbers are always in one distress or another; now we at sea mind nothing while we have beef, biscuit, and flip, but a strong gale, a heavy tide, and a lee-shore.

Sir Scra. Ah, you are happy mortals.

Starb. Mefs, and so we are---but how are your timbers? not crazy, I hope; for I hear as how you have made a matrimonial voyage since I saw you; and strike my flag that station requires a sound bottom, good rigging, an able steersman, and a stout helm.

Sir Scra. Yes, yes, I am married.

Starb. Well, and what sort of a frigate have you got? is she French or Dutch built? crank or broad bottomed? will she ride out a squall of flattery, or is she apt to turn keel upwards? have you found out her trim?

Sir Scra. No, truly; but she has found out mine, and trimmed me with a vengeance.

Starb. And who's fault's that? you was old enough to be your own pilot, wan't you?

Sir Scra. Ay, very true—I have nobody to blame but myself---why just now I had an impudent, bag-wigg'd villain, came to demand five hundred pounds she had lost to him at cards.

Starb. Say you so? board me an she makes many more such trips to the land of the Four Kings, you'll be stranded on the shore of poverty.

Sir Scra. Ay, it must be so; yet what can I do---advise me, brother, pray do advise me (*a loud squall of women*) Mercy deliver us! what's that?

Starb. Burst my guns, it seems the signal for striking on a rock, and eight feet water in the hold.

ENTER

ENTER TIMOTHY passing across.

Sir Scra. Timothy, why this haste?

Tim. I am going for half a dozen doctors. [*Exit*

Sir Scra. Half a dozen doctors!---why Timothy,
---Ruelle.

RUELLE running across.

I can't stop a moment, Sir. [*Exit.*

Sir Scra. Not stop a moment---why?---how---
I am in such confusion I know not what to think
(*Ruelle returns across*) Ruelle---Ruelle---not a word
---what in the name of wonder can possess them
all---oh, I see my hopeful wife.

Starb. What is that there your pleasure-berge?
Strike my flag she shows a snug built thing, and
only wants an able seaman to navigate her---she
carries a signal of distress in her poop tho'.

ENTER LADY BRAINGLESS, supported by RUELLE
and another maid, all three weeping.

L. Brain. Reach me a chair---this unexpected
stroke has quite enfeebled me.

Sir Scr. What stroke, pray, madam?

L. Brain. Oh, Sir Scrapeall, the most fatal---

Sir Scr. What is Zorobabel run away?

L. Brain. Oh worse, worse, the most irreparable
accident.

Sir Scr. How! worse! is the government bank-
rupt?

L. Brain. More dreadful still---let one of these,
whose hearts are not so susceptible of tender im-
pressions, nor so nearly interested as mine, relate
the dismal tale, while I indulge my tears---oh---
oh---oh (*the three women cry*)

Starb. Harkee, brother, the squall can't last
long with such showers.

Sir Scr. If I am kept a moment longer in sus-
pense

penſe I ſhall run diſtracted—tell me, Ruelle, tell me, this dreadful accident, and make me cry too.

Starb. Cry!—harkee, young woman, could not you toſs up a tankard of punch for brother Brainleſs and I, we ſhall weather the gale better.

Sir Scr. Don't talk ſo, don't talk ſo, when perhaps I am ruined.

Ruelle. Oh, Sir, we are all ruined; a heart of flint would melt at ſo pitiful a caſe—I have ſcarce power to tell you; but my lady's, Sir—my lady's—la—la—lap dog's dead—oh—h—h—h (*the three women cry again*).

Starb. A lap-dog—ho! ho! ho!

Sir Scr. La, la, laral, laral derol—poſitively we'll have the punch, brother.

L. Brain. Oh, cruel wretch, to make my grief your ſport—poor little charmer—the ſprightlieſt companion, the politeſt of the four-footed kind; then ſo delicate, he could not drink his tea unſweetened, nor eat bread without butter—was not he a moſt engaging creature, Ruelle?

Ruelle. Ye—ye—yes, madam, I'm ſure I ſhall never forget him, becauſe I think the pretty rogue broke his heart for love.

L. Brain. Do you really think ſo, Ruelle?

Ruelle. I do indeed, madam; for the ſweet creature has never been himſelf ſince lady Doublechin took away her Dido.

L. Brain. Ah, cruel Dido—barbarous Doublechin—well, I am reſolved that Meagre, the phyſician, and Julep, the apothecary, ſhall never come near me again, ſince they could not ſave little charmer.

Sir Scr. How! a doctor and an apothecary! would they were buried with their patient, and their bill along with them.

L. Brain. You have often complained of my little favourite, Sir Scrapeall, but he'll trouble you

you no more—he's out of this troublesome world ; however, in respect of his merits, I must desire to have an epitaph, and a neat marble monument dedicated to his dear memory.

Sir Scr. What ! an epitaph ! and a marble monument for a dog !—Did you ever hear the like, brother ?

L. Brain. What, Sir Scrapeall, is that man your brother ?

Starb. Yes, woman, that man is his brother ; I'm sure I took his sister in tow a voyage of seven years, and as good a sea-boat she was as ever cut water, till death started a plank and sunk her.

L. Brain. What jargon the creature utters ; why, friend, you are as rough and boist'rous as the element you belong to.

Starb. And what then ? mayhap, mistress, though I have no palaver, nor flippaty flappets about me, I'm better than your painted butterflies, that only live while the sun shines ; now all weather's alike to me.

L. Brain. Keep a little farther off—your tar's offensive, friend.

Starb. My tar's better than your musk ; and if you can't bear me along-side, you must strike ; no frenchified engagements for me, yard-arm and yard-arm's Dick Starboard's trim, I can tell you.

Sir. Scr. Ah, well said, brother—give her a little more of it—she talks too fast for me.

L. Brain. Well, Sir Scrapeall, I congratulate you upon having a relation equally polite with yourself ; but that we may not lay aside all decency, I change the subject—Ruelle, you must assist me to lay the plan of charmer's funeral.

Starb. Funeral ! smite his limbs, give him a sea funeral ; stich up his carcass in the reef of an old hammock, clap in some ballast, and heave him overboard into the next horse-pond.

Sir Scr.

Sir Scr. Ay, and too good for him—ah, brother, if she would but listen to your advice, if you would undertake to direct her, some good might be expected.

L. Brain. What! such a porpuſs direct me!

Starb. Avaſt, miſtreſs, avaſt, I don't like the birth ſo well—ſtrike my flag, brother, I had rather navigate my ſhip, the Charming Kate, to Jamaica, without compaſs or helm, than go maſter of her for a month—but what proviſions have you got—I have taken in nothing but two red herrings, and three tankards of grog ſince I came on ſhore; ſo bear a hand. [*pulks Sir Scrapeall and exit*]

L. Brain. So, there go a hopeful pair; a moſt natural alliance: by the help of this ſea-brute, I ſuppoſe, Sir Scrapeall intends to uſurp an authority; yet, weak as I am, they ſhall find ſome hardſhip in attaining a ſuperiority—oh I ſee the Colonel coming moſt luckily to relieve my fatigued ſpirit: Ruelle and you retire. [*Exeunt.*]

ENTER COLONEL PARAPET.

Col. Madam your moſt obedient ſervant.

L. Brain. Oh, Colonel, you are come in happy time to my relief; do you know that I have juſt now been in the condition of poor Andromeda; on the point of being devour'd by a ſea-monſter.

Col. A ſea-monſter, madam!

L. Brain. Yes, truly, the polite brother-in-law of my polite huſband: I aſſure you, Colonel, the brute threw me into a horrid palpitation.

Col. I preſume it was the perſon I met with Sir Scrapeall, madam, who talked ſomewhat of a raſher on the coals, and a bucket of ſlip as he paſſed by.

L. Brain. The very ſame.

Col. Truly an uncouth appearance to addreſs to a Lady; but perhaps, madam, his externals injure conceal'd

conceal'd merit : intrinsic value lies often hid under such rough outside.

L. Brain. Well, Colonel, I must say your good nature and delicacy are remarkable for reconciling inconsistencies, and placing persons, or things, in the most amiable light. But, Colonel---I have met a most melancholly accident since I saw you---sure poor charmer is dead.

Col. Indeed ! I am perfectly concern'd that your Ladyship should lose such an engaging little animal.

L. Brain. Ay, Colonel, you know, and valued his amiable qualifications---well, since his fate was inevitable, it is some comfort to find such genteel sympathy in the breast of a friend ; but that care is not single, Sir Scrapeall takes pains to mortify my concerns.

Col. Truly, madam, I have often blamed fortune in private, which could lavish such a profusion of beauty and merit, as you are possessed of, upon avarice and insensibility---

L. Brain. Oh, Sir, you are infinitely obliging.

Col. And have been sorry to think, that your Ladyship should be exiled into a kind of matrimonial Siberia.

L. Brain. 'Tis too true, Colonel ; but you know my condition, and charitably sooth it with agreeable conversation.

Col. Rather say, madam, I do myself both honour and pleasure, when I render you the smallest satisfaction.

L. Brain. Sir, so refin'd a compliment would prove my inability of return, but that my sister-in-law's approach saves me.

Col. The devil it does. (*aside*)

L. Brain. She will amuse you, Colonel, for some minutes, while I give Ruelle directions about poor Charmer ; which done I shall return to assist you against the violence of a never-ceasing tongue.

Col.

Col. Madam, you are particularly obliging—
(exit L. Brain.) I must endeavour to retreat tho' before she returns, for it would be almost an impossibility to please such contrarieties at once; and, on Emmeline's account, I must, if possible, keep fair with both.

ENTER MRS. BUSY.

Mrs. B. Colonel, your most obedient humble servant—I profess you are grown a great stranger: methinks it is an age since your last visit, and yet I believe it is but three days neither; but expectation makes time long, as the saying is, and you have particular good wishes from this family, I assure you, Colonel.

Col. It is the pride and pleasure of my heart, madam, to deserve them.

Mrs. B. Most elegantly expressed—was not that my sister left the room as I came in?

Col. Yes, madam, it was her ladyship.

Mrs. B. Her Ladyship! humph! these feathers in the cap make people hold their heads so high, forsooth; but you and I, Colonel, know better.

Col. Most certainly, madam; as you say, titles are mere feathers.

Mrs. B. And pray now, Colonel, do you really think this sister of mine, so fine a woman as the world says?

Col. Really, madam, it is hard to say; beauty is not universal; and that which pleases one eye palls upon another; Lady Brainless is not without her attractions; but I must confess there are charms in this house, of milder, steddier nature, which more powerfully command my approbation.

Mrs. B. Infinitely discreet I profess—ah, Colonel, if every fine Gentleman was as prudent, we should not have so many minx presume upon their doll-doufy faces.

Col.

Col. Very true, madam.

Mrs. B. Good housewifery would then take place of rambling and cards; and idle routes give way to the dear society of kind, sober husbands.

Col. And if all the fine ladies had such prudential notions as yours, madam, sense, as well as passion, must own their influence.

Mrs. B. How happy do I esteem myself, Colonel, that my notions so particular agree with yours; I wish her Ladyship was here to be convinced, I am not quite so ignorant as she is pleased to imagine.

Col. Heav'n forbid, till I am gone however. (*aside*)

Mrs. B. And here she comes, I profess—now for it, Colonel.

Col. Would I were gone, I shall most certainly disoblige one of them. (*aside*)

ENTER LADY BRAINLESS.

L. Brain. Well, Colonel, I have settled poor Charmer's funeral procession; he's to be interred under a rose tree, and I am to be chief mourner.

Mrs. B. Lord, sister, I am amazed you can be so unpolite as to trouble the Colonel with that little ugly creature.

L. Brain. Really, madam, I did not come into the city to learn politeness.

Mrs. B. If your Ladyship had, perhaps you might have met some useful instructions——

Col. So, so, now it begins. (*aside*.)

Mrs. B. And persons who would have informed you, that prudence is preferable to all the finical airs of quality.

L. Brain. Prudence—ha! ha! ha! really, madam, you oblige me to trespass upon my present concern, and laugh at your mechanical notions—ha! ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. B. Mechanical notions—if your Ladyship

is confident of your cause, what if we refer ourselves to the Colonel.

Col. Ay now it comes. (*aside*)

L. Brain. You could not have proposed a more agreeable judge; I know he must despise the wretch. (*aside*)

Col. Your ladyship's good opinion does me honour.

Mrs. B. Then madam, we are both pleased—for I know he'll be of my side. (*aside*)

L. Brain. Now then, Colonel, please to let us know if you was to chuse a lady, which you would have her, polite or prudent, according to our opinions of those terms.

Col. Oons! what shall I say? (*aside*) undoubtedly, madam, politeness is one of the most agreeable qualifications of human nature.

L. Brain. What say you to that, madam?

Mrs. B. But, Colonel, did not you say that a prudent behaviour was the most amiable?

Col. Ye—ye—yes, madam, I did, to be sure; and I think so still—that is—I think—bless me! I'm afraid we shan't have time for the necessary disquisition—I was to have met Sir Charles Prudent, and I find I have slip'd my time a quarter of an hour—therefore if you please some other opportunity (*going*)——

L. Brain. No, no, Colonel, you shall determine now.

Mrs. B. Ay, ay, positively you shan't go.

Col. Then I must stand buff I find; I'll try to confuse and so escape (*aside*) why then, ladies, since you insist upon it, I shall endeavour to clear up the point—politeness—ay, we'll consider that first—politeness is a vivifying ray, which animates and enlightens social intercourse; facilitating expression, harmonizing temper, and regulating deportment: as the natural sun influences and animates

mates the vegetable world, so this beauteous child of art, polishes, adorns, and dignifies society.

L. Brain. Infinitely fanciful: what think you now madam?

Mrs. B. Proceed, Sir.

Col. Prudence, I take to be that kind and gentle moderator, whom reason deposes to assist us against the impulse of irregular passions; a cool friend, an infallible guide, to lead with safety through the labyrinth of life.

Mrs. B. And pray what does your ladyship think now?

Col. Nay, ladies, I absolutely declare against any pre-eminence; being thoroughly convinced that they are highly essential to each other, by seeing them so happily united before me. [*bows to each of the ladies.*]

L. Brain. Delicately complaisant—his look gave me the preference. (*aside*)

Mrs. B. Charming man—his eyes spoke in my favour. (*aside*)

ENTER RUELLE.

Ruelle. Colonel, one of your servants desires to speak with you.

Col. In lucky time (*aside*) very well——(*Ruelle whispers Mrs. Busy and gives her a letter*) your Ladyship might observe I was cautious of putting the old Lady out of temper. (*to Lady Brainless*)

L. Brain. I did observe, and commend your humanity. (*Ruelle goes and whispers Lady Brainless*)

Col. I was obliged, madam, to favour her Ladyship's opinion somewhat; to prevent appearing too particular. (*to Mrs. Busy*)

Mrs. B. Most engagingly discreet—I perceived and admired your caution. [*exit. Ruelle.*]

Col. Ladies, you find I am under a necessity of forcing myself from your agreeable company. (*going*)

L. Brain. It's we, Sir, that are the sufferers.

Mrs. B. Yes, Colonel, 'tis we that are unhappy.

Col. I wish I was gone (*aside*) oh ladies—(*going*)

L. Brain. Your Ladyship may spare that trouble, for I'll see the Colonel down stairs.

Col. Heav'ns! you overwhelm me ladies!

Mrs. B. I must and will wait upon you, Colonel.

L. Brain. Consider, madam, you are the elder, and not so fit to bear fatigue.

Col. Nay, then, 'tis time to fly (*exit Lady Brainless after him*)

Mrs. B. The elder! an impudent young minx, to twit me with age—and before the Colonel too—I'll see if I can't take madam a peg lower, with her taunts, and her sneers—but he's my own for all her—I see the dear man loves me—I'll take a chair and go to mother Sly's this instant—she's a notable contriver in such matters, and since I have determined to marry, why should I lose the opportunity of a handsome, sweet, agreeable young fellow: no, no.

Unpractis'd girls, indeed, with blifs may dally,
But sprightly widows ne'er stand shilly, shally.

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT III. SCENE I.

FUSEE dress'd as CAPTAIN SPONTOON.

WELL, if what I have heard the Colonel say be true, that the outside of a man is mostly considered, I am in a fair way of being as much respected as my betters: so Monmouth-Street I thank thee for this gaudy title page; I wish the volume of my brain, like many modern pieces, may not fall short of what is promised—if that should be the case,

I sh a ll

I shall be still the more like a fine gentleman, and at worst may make a brazen front stand for the unfurnished inside, that's some comfort, however; and has been the road to preferment of many an enterprising blade,—Soft; let me recollect my instructions, for what is a military man without his plan of operations.—Fusée, says my master, I know women, and he that courts a widow must throw aside modesty—I know that too, Sir, says I, for I have courted, ah, and married, several of your honours occasional widows.—Well, no matter for that, Fusée, this mother Busy must be taken off at all events; she has received a letter to prepare her for your reception; praise her beauty, be very fond, and the business is done—ay, and when it is done, a hopeful bargain I shall have; there will be no need of any death's head but her face; I shall never see it in a morning but it will put me in mind of the other world; and, to say the truth, I have not much inclination to think that way yet; but, damn it, the hopes of plunder have made many a man run his head against cannon balls; then why should I be afraid of a witch? so most engaging, glib-tongued ancient Lady—have at you.

[*Exit Fusée.*]

SCENE II.

COLONEL PARAPET meeting SIR CHARLES.

Col. Well met, Sir Charles—why this unusual anxiety in your countenance? It is not philosophical I assure you.

Sir Char. Nay, Frank, all our resolution, natural and speculative, must give way upon particular occasions—I am miserable.

Col. Marry! heaven forbid!—why, man, your acres are not swallowed up by an earthquake.

Sir

Sir Char. Pshaw! that were a trifle—I could bear any thing calmly but the disappointment of my heart.—I fear Lady Charlotte has a tincture of that inconstancy which is charged against her sex in general.

Col. How so? whence your suspicion? has she started a rival to amuse you?

Sir Char. Not that I know of, tho' I may fear it—I was to have paid her a visit as this hour, but calling at her house, a servant told me she had set off for her brother's, the Earl of Greenhill's, two hours ago; and that without leaving any apology, or the slightest hint of return.

Col. And this is the mighty source of care! oh love, love, what a capricious deity are thou, who can so turn our wits the seamy side without, as Shakespeare has it.—Prithee, my friend, don't take trifles to heart; this flight of Lady Charlotte's is only the whim of a fine lady, who has the prerogative of custom to give herself as many affected and inconsistent airs as she pleases.

Sir Char. Nay, dear Colonel, don't be too severe; I can't think her good sense descends to so trifling a character as you mean, by a fine Lady; she has spirits without wildness, good-nature without weakness, dignity without affectation, and humility without meanness: therefore this unaccountable behaviour surprizes me the more.

Col. Unaccountable behaviour! not at all—your gravity is an excellent subject for wit and vivacity to play upon—come, come, Sir Charles, rest assured, that he who so palpably devotes himself to a single object, will be liable to such rubs; I love one, yet gallant half a dozen at a time; had you taken the same course, ten to one but her volatile ladyship had long, ere now, flown into your arms upon the wings of jealousy.

Sir Char. Well, Frank, I acknowledge your superiority

periority in the affairs of love; what then would you advise upon the present case?

Col. Faith, Sir Charles, there seems to be but a limited choice of proceedings; you have an excellent set of nags, and if you wish for an immediate ecclaircissement, e'en pursue, and tell her you won't be treated with such indifference for the future; or rather take no notice of the matter 'till her ladyship chuses to come back, which, if I am any judge of woman, she very shortly will.

Sir Char. Your latter opinion shall guide me—her servant mentioned the arrival of Lord Frederic Bloom, her younger brother, could I obtain an intimacy with him it might be useful.

Col. Most certainly, as you would thereby know the motions of the enemy.

ENTER A SERVANT.

Serv. Lord Frederic Bloom's compliments, and this letter, Sir.

Col. Very well, wait a moment—Lord Frederic's compliments! this is somewhat odd, as I never knew any of the family but Lady Charlotte—eh, what have we here?—Charlotte Bloom!—suppose this should be a love-letter?—upon my honour, Sir Charles, I never made any advances.

Sir Char. Dear Colonel, you have alarmed my curiosity; and if the purport is not very particular, your communication will oblige me.

Col. Purport—gad you shall have it all—you shall read it, kiss it, and take it as a relique for adoration if you will—there.

Sir Char. (*Reads*) “ Sir, meeting my brother,
“ Lord Frederic, on the road, and knowing after
“ three years travel, commenced upon his leaving
“ the university, that he must be rather deficient
“ of acquaintance; I have taken the liberty of
“ introducing him to you as a gentleman highly
“ deserving

“deserving his observation and regard. Your
“most, &c. Charlotte Bloom.”—This may be
a lucky hit for me, Colonel.

Col. Right, Sir Charles ; my interest may be of
some use, as the lady honours me with so kind an
opinion—here, friend,---is his Lordship at Lady
Charlotte’s ?

Serv. He is, Sir, and desires to know what
time will be most convenient for his Lordship to
wait on you ?

Col. Oh, my compliments, and I’ll save the
trouble, by waiting upon him immediately (*Exit
Servant*) Well, my friend, I am a notable spy, I
assure you ; and if any thing falls in my way you
may depend upon diligence.

Sir Char. I can never doubt or repay your
friendship ; but as I know your disposition, I shall
refer you to the delicate pleasure which results to
a generous mind from good-natured actions—I
won’t detain you from this visit---when it is over
shall I see you at my house ?

Col. You shall ; so adieu---but harkee, Charles,
in the mean time, I desire, for philosophy’s sake,
that you’ll sigh as little as you possibly can.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

ENTER LADY CHARLOTTE (dressed as Lord Fre-
deric) and EMMELINE.

Emme. Well, Lady Charlotte, there is some-
what so unexpected, and so romantic in this meta-
morphose of yours, that positively I can’t help
laughing, even at the expence of good manners---
ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !---you’ll excuse me.

L. Charlo. Excuse, ha ! ha ! ha ! I’ll laugh
with you, my dear ; I am never better pleased
than when laughing at myself ; and certainly I was
never a better subject for it than at present—but
come, give me your opinion, don’t I make a tole-
rable

nable smart figure in this masculine outside?—a little upon the cockcomb or so—eh?

Emme. Not at all; you have a much better right to the title of a fine gentleman, than many who claim it—but, after all, to what extraordinary purpose have you done this? is it merely to torment poor Sir Charles—bless us what confusion the poor man seemed in, on hearing you had left town so abruptly.

L. Charlo. Why ay, I grant you Sir Charles has all the appearance of an Arcadian swain, and I believe him sincere; but this is only surmise; and when all the happiness of life depends upon a single choice, that one should certainly be well grounded; my disguise is an endeavour at this, and for my friend Emmeline's sake, as well as my own.

Emme. For my sake! in what shape pray?

L. Charlo. In short, child, I want to see you a happy wife as well as myself; and to be plain, I have always imagined your Colonel to be as suspicious a piece of gallantry, as any within the sphere of my observation; now in this form I shall be able to sound the very bottom of his heart, which is more than you could ever be able to do, until it was perhaps too late.

Emme. I have always thought myself under infinite obligations to dear Lady Charlotte's good-nature; but this extraordinary instance of friendship, makes gratitude blush for its poverty.

L. Charlo. Not at all, Emmeline, you would put on a pair of breeches to oblige me, and then the account is ballanced.

ENTER a SERVANT.

Colonel Parapet to wait on your Lordship.

L. Charlo. Very well—conduct him up (*Exit. Servant*) So, his complaisance anticipates my intention of visiting him; and I am glad of it, for

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if

if you'll step into my dressing-room, there you may hear how I play my part. (*Exit. Emmeline*) I hope this Colonel may stand proof for poor Emmeline's sake ; however, at any rate, 'fore knowledge is better than late repentance.

ENTER COLONEL.

Col. My Lord, your most obedient humble servant.

L. Charlo. Colonel, your servant, I am extremely concerned to give you this trouble.

Col. 'Tis a pleasure, my Lord, to wait upon so near a relation to Lady Charlotte ; and I hope to merit the very favourable opinion her Ladyship has indulged me with.

L. Charlo. When there is so much prepossession as I feel, a small share of attention must certainly effect that ; besides I know my sister is not apt to flatter — but come, Colonel, as I have been upon my travels these three years, I must trespass upon you for some account of matters here at home.

Col. Faith, my Lord, I imagine them to be just the same they always were ; and the uncharitable spirit of ridicule, as prevalent among persons of different dispositions as ever ; scarce any thing spoken of but the follies and vices of our neighbours ; while the censors themselves are hourly committing greater enormities than those they stigmatize ; as to the polite and trading world, the first are endeavouring to ruin each other at cards and horse-racing ; and the latter are studying to over-reach one another by deceitful bargains and paper-currency : in short, reputations and circumstances are a general prey for scandal and knavery to hunt through the world, while poor honesty is thrown out of the chace.

L. Charlo. A very comfortable prospect truly ; but I presume, Colonel, you are more attached to,
and

and better acquainted with the sphere of gallantry than any other?

Col. Why, my Lord, it is part of a soldier's profession; the indulgence of peace for his fatigues in war, and it would be ungrateful to reject the blessing; besides, Mars and Venus should never be divorced; for whatever may be said of glory's charms, I believe there is more courage derived from the influence of corporeal beauty, than from the love of fame; nor can any better reason be offered, why Britons are the bravest of men, than that nature has blessed them with the fairest of women.

L. Charlo. The ladies are obliged to you, Colonel; and since we have touched upon them, pray do you know Emmeline Fairlove, Sir Scrapeall Brainless's ward?

Col. Yes, my Lord, I have seen the lady very often.

L. Charlo. I am glad of it, since I must presume you are a better judge of female merit than my sister; but she has possessed me with so high an idea of the lady, that I am in love with her before I see her.

Col. The devil! (*aside*) in love with her, my Lord?

L. Charlo. Yes, truly; and if she answers the description my sister gave of her, I really don't know how far I may go in the road to matrimony.

Col. Confusion! a rival! and a Lord too!--I must throw some rubs in the way if possible (*aside*) Matrimony! ha! ha! ha! I presume your Lordship will hardly drop so soon into a domestic life.

L. Charlo. Why 'tis somewhat early, as you observe, Colonel, but beauty and merit joined, are irresistible; therefore I am quite impatient to hear your opinion; and I don't doubt its being impartial, as I flatter myself with your friendship.

Emme. (*listening*) Now for it.

Col. Your question, my Lord, is somewhat peculiar ; however, to be ingenuous, I think the Lady might make a tolerable decent kind of a citizen's wife ; but I am afraid that quality would fit very awkwardly upon her.

Emme. A very hopeful beginning, truly.

L. Charlo. You surprize me, Colonel !

Col. Besides, she lives in such a queer odd sort of a family, that your Lordship would find any approaches very disagreeable, unless there was a much greater share of beauty to reward your pains,

Emme. Beyond bearing ! deceitful villain !

L. Charlo. So then she's not handsome ?

Col. But very middling, I assure your Lordship.

Emme. Perfidious—blind wretch !

L. Charlo. How could my sister be so egregiously mistaken ?

Col. So the bait will take, I hope ; (*aside*) why, my Lord, I imagine Lady Charlotte's good-nature, here got the better of her judgement ; I have heard her profess a strict friendship for Emmeline ; besides, your Lordship knows that beauty is not a recommendation of one female to another.

Emme. Still complimenting.

L. Charlo. Well, Colonel, as the case is so, I shall just pay her a ceremonious visit to deliver my sister's letter.

Col. Oons ! if he sees her all's over (*aside*) letter, my Lord ?

L. Charlo. Yes, one of introduction—if you will favour me with your company to her guardians, Colonel, I shall get away the sooner ?

Col. To her guardian's—to be sure, my Lord—you honour me—but then, as I told your Lordship, it is such a motley, unaccountable family, that you'll undoubtedly meet a very unpolite reception,

L. Charlo.

L. Charlo. Pray what are they who compose this extraordinary family?

Col. Why, my Lord, there's the old knight, made up of avarice, jealousy, and rudeness—his Lady, Emmeline's sister, a scatter-brained piece of inconsistent affectation——

Emme. So, so, my sister has her share too.

Col. And, ha! ha! ha! ha! an old widow, Sir Scrapeall's sister, who fancy's herself a blooming beauty, and torments every thing in breeches that goes near the house; tho' she's more like an antiquated tapestry figure than any animal of the present age.

L. Charlo. Ha! ha! ha! ha! a most hopeful society indeed.

Col. So that I believe, if your Lordship would send Lady Charlotte's letter, it would do better than a visit.

L. Charlo. Oh, by no means, for I promised to deliver it; besides, I love curiosities—I presume the citizen won't set his great dog at me, as to any thing else I can enjoy it for once—here—get the chariot ready.

Col. So, I have been lying so long to no purpose—this affair must end in a scrape, I see (*aside*)

L. Charlo. Well, Colonel, shall I have the honour of your company to Sir Scrapeall's?

Col. I must beg your Lordship's excuse; I am to call upon Sir Charles Prudent about this hour.

L. Charlo. Sir Charles Prudent—if I don't mistake, I have heard of that gentleman's paying his addresses to my sister; if he is seriously in love with her I pity him; for she is now gone into the country upon a treaty of marriage.

Col. A treaty of marriage!

L. Charlo. Yes; and I believe it is entirely settled.

Col.

Col. So here's comfort for my friend too (*aside*) my Lord I'll take my leave.

L. Charlo. Well, Colonel, I shall depend upon seeing you often.

Col. Certainly, my Lord---but it must not be as a rival. (*aside*)

L. Charlo. Give me leave to wait on you Colonel.

Col. 'Tis needless ceremony, my Lord.

L. Charlo. Nay, I insist upon it. [Exit.

EMMELINE sola.

False man! how unguarded, how credulous are we women to take in the poison of flattery—this discovery of his baseness, unexpected, and mortifying as it is, I must esteem fortunate.

ENTER LADY CHARLOTTE.

Well, Emily, what think you of the Colonel now?

Emme. Think! why that he's like all men, treacherous and base.

L. Charlo. Come, child, I see this trial has put your heart into a horrid palpitation; but be comforted, I entertain a better opinion of your favourite than I did.

Emme. How, Lady Charlotte! after he could treat me so disrespectfully, so rudely; and in every article contradict what he has a thousand times vowed and swore to me.

L. Charlo. Come, you must not judge unfavourably; if I can read countenances right, the thoughts of a rival alarm'd him more than a battery of cannon would.

Emme. But what could be the cause of his treating me so lightly?

L. Charlo. A stroke of policy to secure you to himself; 'tis very common in those affairs, as well as those of love, to affect an indifference for, or even

even to dispraise those things we like best—but come, I must be an assiduous lover of yours, so make haste home, that I may visit you in form—keep good spirits, and fear nothing.

Emme. My lord, your most obedient.

L. Char. Madam, your devoted slave—nay I must gallant you to your chair.

Emme. Ha! ha! ha! ha! [Exeunt.]

ENTER SIR SCRAPEALL and TIMOTHY:

Sir Scr. Four bottles of rum in punch, already! you astonish me Timothy!

Tim. And well I may, an like your worship, but, lackaday, Sir, how can it be otherwise, when that black fellow, the captain's mate, knocked off three pints of punch at a tip, as he called it.

Sir Scr. Would he had been tip'd into the sea before he came here—but where's my wife—eh Timothy?

Tim. In the drawing-room, an like your worship, and has a poor, thin, shabby fellow in black with her.

Sir Scr. A poor, thin shabby fellow in black; what the mischief business can she have with him; by the description, he's neither a gamester, nor a horn-planter—eh Timothy?

Tim. Marry, I believe not Sir; but whatever the man is I fancy he's a little mad, for when I opened the door, the hinges creaking for want of oil, he started thus—

Sir. Scr. Take care of my gout, Timothy.

Tim. Stared in my face wildly, and cried, hark!

Hark! how the grating hinges croak despair!

Sir Scr. Hinges and despair!—mad indeed!—and what has such a creature to do here? we are all mad enough without him—eh Timothy?

Tim. Ah, Sir, it was not so in my good old Lady's time—no such rantipole-doings; we might

go to bed then at ten o'clock, and mind church twice of a Sunday, besides all holidays; but now we are up five nights a week, and never see a church; I am made a slave in my old days, and am destroying both soul and body in your worship's service; but you are a kind indulgent master, and if my old mi—mi—mistress had lived—I ca—ca—cant help weeping when I think of her—oh—h—h.

Sir Scr. It is very true Timothy, very true; and tho' I did not shed a tear when Cicely died, I ca—ca—cant help it now oh—h—h—but what does all this signify; while we are weeping for grief, the cormorants, on ev'ry side, are devouring me up—eh—what fellow's this Timothy?

Tim. Oh, 'tis the madman, an like your worship.

ENTER CRAMBO.

Cram. Mirror of knighthood I am trebly yours.

Sir Scr. Quite lunatic, Timothy; well honest friend, what would you say to me?

Cram. That royal sword ne'er dubb'd a worthier knight.

Sir Scr. Very likely, friend, very likely.

Cram. In short, Sir, as common conversation sounds more natural in prose than blank verse, though not so lofty; I shall give respite to the muse, and tell you, Sir, in plain English, that I am a poet.

Sir Scr. A poet!—what's that friend?

Cram. How, Sir! don't you know what a poet is?

Sir Scr. No truly—do you Timothy?

Tim. Lackaday, Sir, not I.

Cram. Astonishing! then pray Sir what is it you do know!

Sir Scr. Why the nine figures, friend, the nine figures.

Cram. Low and mechanical, what are the nine figures

figures to the nine muses, from whom a poet descends? a poet, who gives life to inanimate things; harmonizes language; realizes ideas; calls back past time; constitutes heroes; immortalizes fame; destroys thousands, rattles drums, sounds trumpets, points spears, whets swords, springs mines, storms towns, rouses tempests, wrecks fleets, launches thunder, wings lightening—(*during this rhapsody Sir Scrapeall and Timothy traverse the stage, Crambo pursuing.*)

Sir Scr. Stand between us, Timothy—the fit's on him.

Cram. In short Sir, a poet is—is the most complicated, comprehensive, and exalted character upon earth; and, Sir, I am the greatest poet of the present age.

Sir Scr. If that is the case, I see plainly by your dress, what kind of a trade it is.

Cram. Ah, nothing at all, Sir; the immortal Homer begged his bread, yet is richer in fame than the opulent Croesus—but to my business here, Sir; having been informed that a fav'rite domestic of your Lady's died lately, and that she wished to have an epitaph——

Sir Scr. How! an epitaph!

Cram. Yes, Sir, and I assure you it was originally written for a very promising young nobleman; but his avaricious parents not chusing to pay the proper price, I have adapted it to Lady Brainless's domestic.

Sir Scr. Domestic! why I have had no death in my family these seven years, but a lap-dog.

Cram. And he, Sir, is the subject of my piece—her Ladyship approves it highly—I'll read it to you.

Sir Scr. You need not trouble yourself, friend—I wish he was gone, Timothy.

Tim. And I too, Sir.

Cram. Let me see—here—no that's my poem for
G the

the first son of Lord Stately, when he happens to be born—and this is my copy of verses on beau Feathertop's mistress, to pass as his own—oh, here, here's the epitaph—now, now, Sir, be pleas'd to mind.

Stop passenger, who e'er thou art,
And taste of grief the bitter smart;
While to your wounded ears I tell,
(mind, Sir, Prosopopœia, the monument speaks)
That Charmer's dead—of dogs the belle!
Truly pathetic!
Of nicest judgement—purest taste,
With every canine virtue graced;
The desert world now cannot boast,
Such merit as in him is lost.

there, Sir, there's an epitaph, might serve the greatest man in the land, and the price no more than five guineas.

Sir. Scr. How! what! five guineas!

Cram. Yes, Sir, and it's richly worth twenty; nor would I take less, but that I hope to have the honour of writing epitaphs for you, Sir, and all your family.

Sir Scr. How! before we are dead!

Cram. Oh, Sir, nothing commoner; we never wait for events—we are prepar'd for every thing; I have occasional panagerics by me to serve all the victories, heroes, beauties, and patriots of a whole century; I have an excellent stock I assure you.

Sir. Scr. Go, go, I have no business for a scribbler.

Cram. A scribbler! ha!—oh most indignant term.

Sir Scr. Timothy, shew the man out.

Cram. Is this for one, that treads Parnassus hill?
That quaffs of Helicon's inspiring streams?
Melpomene, Apollo, and Calliope;
Urania;

Urania : all the tuneful tribe, unite
In just revenge of your insulted bard.

Sir Scr. Hey day ! Parnassus hill ! that I suppose is a cant phrase for Ludgate hill, where they pick pockets ; and these are his accomplices who are to cut our throats, perhaps—a terrible dog—Timothy, turn him out.

Tim. He'll mind your worship most ; besides, Sir, suppose he should bite, and make a poet of me too.

Sir Scr. Then call brother Starboard, he'll do it at once—and that will bring him from the punch too.

Cram. Say shall the guineas be produced or not ?

Tremble, Sir Knight, at an incensed muse,
That brandishes a pen full fraught with gall.

Sir Scr. Ay, ay, 'tis so ; I thought the fellow wanted to rob me.

ENTER STARBORD (singing) with a punch bowl.

Early in the morning, the nineteenth of may,
For ever be recorded the glorious ninety-two :

yo, ho ; what squall now, brother Brainless ?

Sir Scr. Why here's an impudent fellow won't go out of my house, and I want you to turn him out.

Starb. What this here weather-beaten thing ?—strike my topsails he looks as if he had been on short allowance a whole West-India voyage : why you would not have me give such a crazy yawl as this a broadside ? that would be just the same, as thof a first rate should fire into a dung-boat.

Sir Scr. Ah, he's a terrible fellow for all that.

Starb. Say you so ? mafs then he must have something concealed under hatches ; he must depend upon close quarters, like a Newcastle cat ; he has nothing above board but the ensigns of

poverty : I'll hail him—yo, ho, what cheer, what cheer, mess-mate.

Cram. Who e'er thou art, most inconfid'rate man,
By thus intruding on my reverie,
Thou hast depriv'd me of the noblest
thought.

Starb. What thought—spring my bowsprit I
never think at all ; but here's brother Brainleis says
as how you loom like one of those small craft, that
lie under the land to see what they can surprize.

Sir Scra. Ay, I do say so ; now tell brother
Starboard what and who you are?

Cram. Truth cannot hurt where innocence defends
And the foul breath of scandal I defy,
Though belch'd from Erebus and Stygian
gloom ;

Therefore be told, since you desire to know,
Crambo's my name, and poetry my trade.

Starb. Zoons ! brother ! don't make so many
tacks when you may sail right a-head—Poetry,
that's writing of ghosts, bloody murders, and
ballads.

Cram. In lyric verses I have written songs.

Starb. Say you so ; slice me but I like a good
song ; I had a poet on board my ship once, I can't
say he was able, for he could scarce hand, reef,
and steer ; but he was a damn'd rum duke : so we
used to clap him on the capstern, as they do mon-
keys on board East-India ships, to play tricks and
make us merry—here, mess-mate, stow in some
punch.

Cram. Punch is the earthly nectar that I like.

[drinks.

Sir Scra. So, so, here's fine work, another cor-
morant introduced. (*aside*)

Starb. Hark you, brother poet, could not you
make a good jocularous song upon my fat landlady
at

at the punch-bowl? or upon my ship the Charming Kate?

Cram. It may be done, altho' a barren theme.

Starb. Enough, enough, put it upon the stocks, rigg it with a merry tune, and we'll launch it in ten gallons of flip, to wash down some good beef and biscuit, or a dish of bubble and squeek; what say you to that, heart of oak? mess, you seem to want some ballast in your hold—go to brother Brainless's locker, and take in some, or you'll overset the first sharp gale.

Cram. The epitaph, Sir Knight, you will not have?

Sir Scr. Begone, sirrah, you and your balderdash together.

Starb. Avast, avast, what epitaph?

Sir Scr. Why truly one for my wife's lap-dog; and the unconcionable knave would have five guineas for it.

Starb. Five guineas! mess, that's top and top-gallant—no, no, brother, must not carry too much head-sail neither;—however, if you can make it serve my wife, who lies at anchor in Stepney church-yard, and me, when I steer to the same port, I'll tip you one piece towards getting a better main-sheet, than this here tattered piratical flag.

Cram. To what an ebb, oh genius art thou come?

It shall be done--what is thy consort's name?

Starb. Consort, prithee keep thy helm steady, and don't veer out more cable than needs: my wife's name was Margery, and mine Dick Starboard.

Cram. Horridly dissonant—to-morrow's sun

Shall not to Thetis liquid lap descend,

Ere you receive the epitaph and song. (*going*)

Starb. Harkee, bring too at the pantry, and take in some sea-store—yo ho, Timothy, here fill the bucket again—but not so much water—Sblood,

if this last tift had been in Greenland, we should have had nothing to fwallow but gobbets of ice in five minutes.

Sir Scr. Oh, mercy upon me! (*afide*)

Starb. Come, brother, fteer this courfe; we'll make a Virginia trip, take in fome pipes of tobacco; touch at Jamaica for a few gallons of rum, and then make fail for the land of Nod.—I expect my boatswain here in lefs than half a glafs; he fhall crack fome forecaftle jefts, and haul up our hearts with a bowling of fea-wit to the top-gallant maff of jocularity—come, you being a heavy failer I'll take you in tow. [*Pulls Sir Scrapeal*]

Sir Scr. Softly, foftly, good brother Starboard, I'll follow.

Starb. Nay, nay, an we don't make way a-head we fhall lofe the tide—fo bear a hand. [*Exit.*]

Sir Scr. I fhall have no head, hand, heart, or any thing elfe to bear foon, at this rate—ay, I have it of all fides---my precious wife is fafhion mad, my doating fifter courting mad, my fea brother punch mad, my ward husband mad, and I myfelf horn mad---fure as pretty a fet as ever met in one family; and for our comforts, I believe all incurable: lackaday what a miserable wretch am I!--I want nothing to compleat me but poverty and the tooth-ach.

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT

ACT IV. SCENE I.

SIR CHARLES and the COLONEL.

DEAR Colonel, this unexpected rival of yours adds to my own perplexity; but from the idea I have of your mistress, I think your happiness in no danger.

Col. There it is; every man thinks his own case worst; mischief on it, I am chiefly vexed, that after such experience I should let any attachment have power to perplex me—however I threw what objections I could in the way.

Sir Char. How so?

Col. Why I gave as unfavourable an idea as I could of the family—nay, went so far as to contradict my heart in regard of Emmeline's beauty and merit—but, Sir Charles, in my confusion I had forgot to tell you that Lady Charlotte's expedition into the country is upon a treaty of marriage.

Sir Char. A treaty of marriage! with who?

Col. That his Lordship did not particularize, but said the affair was settled.

Sir Char. Sdeath! it cannot be! what, after permitting my addresses with most engaging condescension; after intimating I was not disagreeable to her, and giving delicate hopes of a happy issue; after all this to change without the smallest pretext of offence, or assigning the slightest reason.

Col. So, my friend, it appears at present—you know the brother could not have any view, and he mentioned it with a tender sense of your disappointment.

Sir Charl. My disappointment! he should rather have felt for his sister's most egregious falsehood

hood—if she has jilted me I'll expose her publicly.

Col. I am afraid, Sir Charles, that revenge will light upon yourself—fashion and spirit will only laugh at your sincere ~~easy~~ disposition.

Sir Char. Shall I therefore tamely bear such an insult to my heart and affections? if I can't prevent the match I'll at least render it as disagreeable as may be; I'll take post for the Earl's tomorrow morning, lay my previous claim before him, upbraid her inconstancy, and, if the new lover should have spirit enough to appear, convince him I am not that commodious passive utensil she would make of me.

Col. I applaud your resolution; and if you have any occasion for an auxiliary sword you know where to find it: in the mean time I think you had better find Lord Frederic and receive fuller information from him; besides, if you can detain him for the evening it may be of singular service to me:

Sir Char. The latter motive alone is sufficient to excite my diligence; for, rest assured, dear Colonel, that whatever my cross stars design for me, I heartily wish your affairs may feel the influence of a propitious planet.

Col. And be satisfied, Sir Charles, my happiness must be incomplete without yours; therefore let us hope the best on both sides. [*Exeunt severally.*]

RUELLE conducting FUSEE.

Ruelle. Please to come this way, Sir, and Mrs. Busy will wait on you immediately.

Fusee. Very well, I shall attend the lady's leisure, child, la, la, la, (*sings*)

Ruelle. What an impudent fellow is this (*aside*) your honour won't be angry if I ask a question?

Fusee. No, not at all, my dear.

Ruelle.

Ruelle. Pray did your honour ever hear of a brother of mine, one Thomas Ruelle, a soldier?

Fusée. No, child; nor was it at all likely I should, unless he had been in my own company; we officers seldom know any thing of the private, but that they are men, or look like such; we who bear commissions are entirely among ourselves, my dear, la, la, la, la (*sings*)

Ruelle. Ha! ha! ha! ha! I can hold no longer—well said captain *Fusée*; why, sirrah, could you imagine that fine cloaths, a bag wig, and quality airs, could hide that sweet gunpowder face from my knowledge?

Fusée. Pox o' this discerning jade, I shall infallibly be blown up (*aside*)

Ruelle. Bless me, Captain! does your well-tryed assurance fail you—pray what scheme, what military trick is your honour upon in this disguise?

Fusée. Since 'tis in vain to dissemble, I'll e'en tell you—my master wanting to get the old lady of this house off his hands, has put me into masquerade—I have had but one conference, and yet, by the help of mother Sly, want nothing but a parson to finish the affair.

Ruelle. Mighty well! and what then becomes of all your fine spun protestations to me, Mr. Sauce-box?

Fusée. Why you know, Mrs. Ruelle, Pyramus and Thisbe never loved so well; but you was always throwing dependance and poverty in my teeth, so I thought it high time to mend myself.

Ruelle. A very fine come-off indeed; but I'll spoil your master's project, and your's, Mr. Impudence, I will, and discover all this moment.

Fusée. Nay, dear Ruelle, don't be so cruel as that neither.

Ruelle. Dear Ruelle—not so much familiarity, puppy, you and your master are a couple of de-

H

ceitful

ceitful forsworn rakehells, and ought to be exposed.

Fusée. What will nothing pacify you? nothing bridle that harmonious tongue?

Ruelle. No, wretch—not all the eloquence you have.

Fusée. Why then let my master speak—he desired me to present his compliments and this (*gives a purse*) the first I had no scruple to give, but the latter I thought to have saved.

Ruelle. Very honest indeed, noble captain, and like the rest of your tricks—let me see—hum—hum—ten guineas! why ah, these are compliments worth receiving, and shows the Colonel knows how to speak most feelingly—Yet, after all, must I not only lose so sweet a swain, but, as I have read in some play, be made myself the instrument? must I not only die, but plunge the dagger in my heart myself? this is indeed refining on calamity.

Fusée. Tender loving soul—I never thought her so fond as this—poor pretty soft rogue, let me kiss off thy tears.

Ruelle. Tears!—ha! ha! ha! ha! not so foolish as that neither, good Mr. Captain; and since your sincerity is brought to light, I'll show you that I was prepared against it.

Fusée. What does the jade mean?

Ruelle. Mean, why I mean there's a sea captain, worth ten thousand pounds, my master's brother-in-law, whose heart I have so engaged, by helping him to some bowls of punch more than Sir Scrape-all allowed, that he has given me several kind glances, squeezed my hands almost to a jelly; and sworn, if I have a mind, he'll get a parson to splice us together to-morrow morning.

Fusée. Oh, snap him by all means; and when we have made the double match, you and I can be on better terms than ever, Mrs. Ruelle.

Ruelle.

Ruelle. Stand off, jackanapes, and learn a proper distance to your betters—you and your old madam, must not put yourself on a footing with a real Captain's Lady; for my mess-mate, as he calls himself, though he's but a scurvy original, has the recommendation of a fine gilded frame to set him off—I shall so gall madam Fusée by taking place of her—for I am resolved, when once Mrs Starboard, to hold my own; to pay as many visits, to wear as fine cloaths, and have as grand a route as any city lady of them all.

Fusée. Hoity toity! what whirligigs fortune has planted in the wench's head already.

Ruelle. Captain, to your arms, the General's at hand. [Exit.

Fusée. Sblood! this mistress of mine has the same effect upon me that a labelled bottle has upon the stomach of a sick man;—but I must take the dose to cure the consumptive state of my pockets.

ENTER MRS. BUSY.

Captain, your very most humble servant.

Fusée. Madam, your eternal slave.

Mrs. B. Lard, Captain, I am most infinitely concerned at the rudeness of having made you wait so long, and scarce know how to apologize; but my poor neighbour, Mrs. Dolefull, who has a sad fellow of a husband, came to consult me, and would not let me stir.

Fusée. Madam, though your absence to me is worse than riding the wooden horse, standing upon the picket, being tied up to the halberts, or even running the gantelope, upon so good-natured an occasion of delay as comforting a distressed neighbour, I must be not only satisfied, but pleased also at the beauty of your mind, as much as I am captivated with the beauty of your person, madam.

Mrs. B. Bless me, *Sir*, the force and delicacy of your compliment, makes me blush; I profess it does—yet who would ever trust a man after what my good friend *Mrs. Sly* related of the Colonel.

Fusee. Oh, name him not, madam, the young fellow is indeed plausible enough, but nothing of a soldier except the title—good friends, no merit; and as to gallantry, I know he makes it his business to boast of favours from the ladies.

Mrs. B. Nay, *Sir*, I defy him there, he could never boast of favours from me but in an honourable way—I don't flaunt about with, profligate young fellows—no—I act with discretion—I have an unfulfilled character to support—ay, ay—if some forward flirting minx's of the age, would take half so much care of reputations as they do of complexions, there would not be such wicked and sensual doings.

Fusee. Very true, madam—ravishing sentiments—killing eyes—let me swear by the horrors of war, that though I have had my hat taken off by a four and twenty pounder; though my beard has been close singed by the flash of a cannon; tho' my teeth have been picked with bayonets; though a whole platoon of musquet balls has passed thro' my body; and though I have been three times blown up on the forlorn hope; yet never did my heart feel such palpitation as those charms have caused.

Mrs. B. Oh dear, that's a most powerful impression—well, military gentlemen undergo great hardship—and I presume you are forced to kill people in your own defence, *Sir*?

Fusee. Certainly, madam—why now in the battle of—of—pshaw, pox, I have been in so many I don't know which it was—but this single arm demolished two French Marqui's, four Counts, and

and above a dozen rank and file; but such bloody deeds are at an end; the promise of your fair hand, madam, has made me determine to throw up my commission.

Mrs. B. Obliging and tender to the last degree.

Fusée. But I shan't quit the service of my country entirely; I have a borough waiting for me, and I believe I shall accept of it—but, madam, say when shall the special licence, I have obtained, take effect.

Mrs. B. You are so zealous, Sir, but since you are determined e'en when you please.

Fusée. To-morrow morning then, my fair, the chaplain of our regiment shall attend, and I'll fly upon the wings of love to give you notice.

Mrs. B. Dear Sir, you are so irresistably persuading—I shall certainly attend your call.

Fusée. Transporting sound!

Mrs. B. Bless me, I hear somebody coming; and I would keep all snug till things are done.

Fusée. Madam your words plant silence on my lips—ten thousand soft adieus.

Mrs. B. The same let me return—remember to-morrow

[*Exeunt severally.*]

LADY BRAINGLESS meeting the COLONEL.

L. Brain. Colonel you are welcome.

Col. Your Ladyship's most obedient—pray, madam, was not that Lord Frederic who parted from you just now?

L. Brain. The same, Sir.

Col. So then here's anticipation against me. (*aside*)

L. Brain. I profess, Colonel, your coming has given me great pleasure; I began to almost despair of you; and my route would have been as insipid in your absence as a humdrum society of country-folks set to cards in a winter's evening.

Col.

Col. Your Ladyship does me particular honour.

L. Brain. Well, after all this matrimony is a very sad thing—Siberia, I think you called it, did not you, Colonel?—notwithstanding which, my sister I believe will shortly travel to that desert clime—well, I hope she may find it a pleasanter spot than I have done.

Col. Your sister, madam!

L. Brain. Yes, truly---Lord Frederic, tho' his first visit, I find has hinted something that way, and my sister seems to have no objection.

Col. 'Sdeath! 'tis as I feared (*aside*)--this is a very sudden affair indeed, madam; but perhaps the match may not be so agreeable to Sir Scrapeall, and she can't marry without his consent.

L. Brain. That's true, as you say, Colonel; but I believe his generous worship considers her as a saleable piece of goods, and would be glad to make a profitable affair of his consent.

Col. That hint may be of use to me (*aside*) I should hardly have supposed your Ladyship's sister capable of so precipitate a compliance.

L. Brain. Why its a little out of the common course, but the impressions of love are lightning-winged, and very variable in their flight---witness those tender expressions, and the profusion of regard you have lavished upon me, Colonel--though any woman might be vain of the conquest, yet I never sought it: however I am really concerned you should be so much in love with me; but what can I possibly do?

Col. A hopeful theme for my perplexity (*aside*) I am much debtor to your Ladyship's humanity, and must be content to sigh away my passion in absence.

L. Brain. Absence; nay that looks like absolute despair--and despair is a very sad thing---I should grieve to be the cause of it---come, who knows,

knows, Colonel, my agreeable lord and master can't live always, and when he's gone——

Col. I wish I was gone with all my heart (*aside*) your Ladyship is so much in the right, that hope, tho' ever so distant, beams cheering rays; but if Lord Frederic should prevail, and blast——

L. Brain. Lord Frederic! why you know Colonel, he addresses my sister.

Col. True, madam—he does so—I—I mistook—you'll excuse my confusion.

L. Brain. Poor man, I protest I pity him, I never saw him so much affected before, but I can't help the bewitching power of my eyes (*aside*)—nay, Colonel, be comforted, within the bounds of honour you may command me.

Col. I can't in the least doubt your Ladyship's goodness, but ardent love is impatient of delay and fearful of defeat, therefore if your sister should resolve to check my wishes and favour a rival.

L. Brain. My sister—you don't imagine she shall direct my choice.

Co'. No, madam—I did not mean that—but then in case—I say that if your Ladyship—a—oons, I don't know what to say.

L. Brain. I see my staying does but perplex him the more—humanity instructs me to withdraw that he may have time to recover—well, Colonel, perhaps the company will compose your spirits and banish the train of impertinent thoughts which so busily intrude upon your quiet—I'll leave you with Lord Frederic till we sit down to cards, and I must positively insist upon your being of my party. [*Exit.*]

Col. Pox o'party, cards, and company; every moment till I see Emmeline is torture.

ENTER LADY CHARLOTTE.

L. Charlo. Well, Colonel, I must say you are a gentleman of very difficult taste, for, as I remember,

ber, you told me that Emmeline was very middling in point of beauty, now I think her exquisite y charming.

Col. It may be so, my Lord.

L. Charlo. may be so—nay it is so, Colonel—I profess myself the Lady's champion, my sword is devoted to her service as well as my heart, and I shall esteem any insinuation against her charms as high treason against the queen of beauty.

Col. Your Lordship is very rapturous upon the occasion, and I don't doubt but your sword is as ready as you speak it; however, since matters are come so far, I must take the liberty to inform you that the Lady does not stand in need of your knight errantry, for I have professed my service, which having been accepted, I cannot now decline.

L. Charlo. Hey day! why certainly we are got to cross purposes; what a person of Colonel Parapet's taste interfere with such an odd family as this, and devote himself to a young Lady who can only make a tolerable citizen's wife, on whom quality would sit very awkwardly? ha! ha! ha! ha! now I shall take the pains to polish this rough diamond.

Col. Your Lordship is facetious, but to dash your lordship's hopes, know that a previous claim to the Lady's favour has been made by me, and countenanced by her, which I presume, my Lord, will put an end to your pretensions.

L. Charlo. Put an end to my pretensions! as soon to my life, Colonel.

Col. If that be your resolution, my Lord, I know but of one decision—you have, in appearance, an excellent sword, and I cannot doubt either your Lordship's skill or courage in the use of it.

L. Charlo. A very rational method of argument, truly; right military logic, and in regard of us young fellows may be salutary, our constitutions are too sanguine, and breathing a vain must be
useful,

useful, so I shan't baulk your resolution—come Sir. (*draws.*)

Col. Spoke with the generous pleasantry of true courage, and strict honour, it will be some pleasure, if I should fall, to fall by so brave a hand. (*draws*)

L. Charlo. Let me warn you, Colonel, to keep at a distance; for there is not a man in England could stand long before me at close quarters.

Col. You are particularly generous, my Lord, but I am prepared for all events.

L. Charlo. Very well, Sir—come on then—yet hold—two points we have forgot: it won't be so decent to throw the family into confusion with our private animosity, and if in this combat the Lady's favourite, which ever it is, should fall, the conqueror will have no cause for triumph; so that being somewhat between hawk and buzzard, I think the Lady should be consulted; and if she declines an explanation we can but appeal to our swords at last.

Col. True, my Lord, and on that footing let me have the honour to call myself your Lordship's friend.

L. Charlo. I cordially embrace your proposal, and here the Lady comes most opportunely; if you'll open the case you shall have all the justice imaginable.

ENTER EMMELINE.

Emme. Colonel, your humble servant.

Col. Madam, your most obedient—I am sorry there should be any occasion to desire an explanation of what, for particular reasons, I have endeavoured to conceal; but his Lordship informing me of such a design, he either has or intends to put in for your favour, I am under the necessity, madam, of requesting that you will do justice to the previous right I assert.

I

Emme.

Emme. Right! Colonel!—I protest you astonish me! I am an entire stranger to the meaning of this formal address.

Col. A stranger, madam!

Emme. Quite so I assure you, Sir—you talk of right, and favour, and justice; but upon what cause, and between what parties I really cannot conceive.

Col. How, madam!

Emme. And if I did, not having been used to the law 'tis very probable I might not be able to decide; however the curiosity incident to my sex, induces me to request an explanation.

Col. I am thunderstruck!—is it possible, madam, you can need an explanation?

L. Charlo. Come, come, Colonel, this affected surprise, and these distant insinuations are unfair, I'll deal more candidly, and set the Lady right at once—you must know, madam, that happening to mention the impression your charms have made upon my heart, this gentleman, my friend, declared that he had already preferred his addressee—

Emme. What! his addressee to me!

L. Char. Yes, madam, and that you had received them most favourably.

Emme. Favourably—is it possible you could advance this, Colonel!

Col. Why, madam, did you not?

L. Charlo. So upon this supposition, the colonel very kindly proposed his cutting my throat, or my cutting his; and if you had not appeared, madam, like the dove with the olive branch, I know not what might have been the consequence, for our resolution is seemed very terrible on both sides.

Col. Your Lordship is very fanciful and merry; but I am not in a mood of temper to bear sneers at present.

L. Charlo. Nay now, Colonel, you are quite too

too severe, that you'll neither allow me to love prattle nor laugh, ha! ha! ha! ha!

Col. Fire and fury!

Emme. So, so, so, now the mystery begins to clear up; and I perceive that what appeared rudeness is merely the unhappy effects of frenzy.

Col. Sdeath! madam! frenzy?

Emm. Most certainly; could any thing else have introduced such romantic chimæras, my Lord?

Col. Madam, this affected ignorance of what you too well know, may prove insincerity, but cannot add to the reputation of candor and judgment—choice is undoubtedly free; but that choice once fixed, does not admit of alteration without some material reason.

Emme. Ay, there, Sir, I entirely come in with your opinion had any such choice been made: but I see you are quite too violent for argument, therefore I think it will be most prudent to retire.

Col. Hold, madam.

L. Charlo. Nay, no violence.

Col. Sdeath! Sir, dare you interpose? (*draws*)

Emme. Ah! (*screams*)

L. Charlo. Sheath your sword, Colonel, I shan't fight a lunatic, positively.

ENTER LADY BRAINLESS and MRS BUSY hastily.

L. Brain. Bless me what was the reason of that scream?—a sword drawn—ah, I shall certainly faint.

Mrs. B. The Colonel—my blood boils at the fellow.

Col. So, I shall have the whole crew upon me, (*aside*)

L. Brain. For heav'n's sake, Emmeline, what is the meaning of all this?

Emme. Only the Colonel, sister, who because I

would not confess being in love with him, very heroically intended to murder his Lordship.

L. Brain. What! you in love with him?

Emme. Yes, truly, and talks of having paid his addresses in form; asserts they were favourably received; and charges me with insincerity.

L. Brain. What were his professions to make a cat's paw of me—my pride is hurt (*aside*)

Mrs. B. Ah, have a care child—he's a most dangerous fellow, he would have imposed upon me if he could.

Col. Yes, I shall have it now, and soundly too. (*aside*)

L. Brain. How, Sir! did you make love to my sister?

Col. To your sister, madam—

Mrs. B. Did not you sigh, and vow, and swear to me perjur'd wretch?

Col. To you!—

L. Brain. What was that your delicate taste?

Mrs. B. Where was your discretion.

Col. Oons! I had no discretion to run myself into such a—

L. Brain. Such a what, Sir?

Mrs. B. Ay, Sir, such a what?

Col. Why, such, such—'sdeath! no words can paint my condition.

L. Brain. Have not you attempted to asperse my sister?

Mrs. B. Did you not strive to delude me?

L. Charlo. I find you are a general lover; Colonel, ha! ha! ha! ha!

Col. And what then, my Lord?

L. Brain. Why then you are a deceitful treacherous hypocrite.

Mrs. B. A base, designing, scurvy fellow.

Col. I am infinitely obliged to you, ladies.

L. Brain. You are an inveigler of hearts.

Mrs. B.

Mrs. B. A breaker of vows.

L. Brain. A vile betrayer.

Mrs. B. A monster of prey.

Col. Mighty well, mighty well, truly; I have brought myself to a fine pass here; bubbled of my mistress, jeer'd by a coxcomb, baited like a bear by a couple of—well ladies I hope your lungs may be the better for this breathing whatever my ears may have suffered; for you, madam, who have so very short a memory, or such a weathercock heart, I have only to repent the knowledge of so much beauty and falsehood; his facetious Lordship I may meet in a fitter time and place. (*going.*)

Mrs. B. Hold, hold, Sir.

Col. What for you to begin again! 'fdeath! I'd sooner stand at the mouth of a charged cannon with a lighted match at the touch-hole. [*runs off.*]

L. Brain. Positively he shan't escape so easy.

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. B. Easy; no, no, he shall have t'other fararara before he gets off.

[*Exit.*]

L. Charlo. Ha! ha! ha! ha! let's follow and have a little more of it.

Emme. With all my heart—tho' I almost begin to pity him.

[*Exeunt.*]

ENTER STARBOARD, RUELLE leading him,

Ruelle. Bless me, Sir! have a care—I'm afraid you'll fall.

Starb. No, no, my little pilot—you know the song—steddy, boys, steddy—thof I do carry too much canvas, and sail gunwale too, in a rolling sea I shall weather the gale—but strike my topsails, what are all these fresh-water passengers that are come aboard our ship, we sha'nt have stowage for them.

Ruelle. You mean, Sir, the company that are coming to my Lady's route.

Starb.

Starb. Route what's that?

Ruelle. Why, Sir, a great many ladies and gentlemen who meet to play at cards all night.

Starb. An that be their trim, spring my bowsprit, if I were master of the vessel but I'd heave all such live lumber overboard—but what say you, my little pinace, to that same voyage I was talking about? an you like it I'll heave out a hawser of love, and take you in tow for the port of matrimony.

Ruelle. La, Sir, I am afraid you only want to delude me; I have heard such strange things of you gentlemen.

Starb. Gentlemen! strike my flag not so bad as that neither—I'm a sailor, my heart of gold, not like one of your land pirates, who fight under false colours, and trade to horn-fair; we at sea stick to our sweethearts as we do to our ships, as long as they can swim—so if you like to swing in my hammock say the word; I'll cruize for a parson to-morrow morning, that shall splice us fast together as if we were at moorings with the best bower and cable of a first—

Ruelle. To be sure, Sir, you are very good; and I must own have won my heart; but I am afraid that Sir Scrapeall will be angry.

Starb. And what then? think you he's to have steering of me?—blow me up, Dick Starboard has not been so many leagues on the salt sea to be commanded by any land-lubber of them all.

Ruelle. Yes, Sir, but your family may think it such a disgrace; and I would not have it said for the whole world—you know, Sir, I am but a waiting-woman.

Starb. A waiting-woman! and what then? board me I was but a swabber myself, so there's family for family, ho! ho! ho!—mefs 'tis not always safe to sail in your gilded ginger-bread pleasure

ture-boats—I like your model and trim; and look, d'ye see, if you'll chuse me master, I'll navigate you while there's compass, helm, and sea-store.

Ruelle. Indeed, Sir, I don't know what to say to you; you are so fond, and so engaging, and so sincere, that, excuse my blushes—I can't possibly refuse you any thing.

Starb. Why that's well said—this seals my commission (*kisses her and stumbles forward*) avast, avast, mess I shipp'd a head-sea on my poop there, and had much ado to come to rights again—well, my little frigate, I'll clear out of the canonical custom-house, and steer away with you for Merryland to-morrow morning—wind and weather permitting—mess thou shalt be rigg'd as fine, and swagger with any quality yacht of them all; and so, d'ye see, if you'll tofs me up such another can of flip as I had just now, and make a trip with it to my hammock, when its my watch I'll do the same for you.

Ruelle. Sir, I thought you might want something, so I kept the keys; Sir Scrapeall ordered Timothy to take them to bed, but I insisted on having them.

Starb. Well said, again, my little trimmer—run me ashore an it had not been for thee I might have lived on rope's ends and four small beer in this here ship; but choak my pumps, and scuttle my bottom, an she'll swim long---so many masters and never a steersman, she'll soon be on the shallows. (*going jostles the side wing*) So, so, bring the land marks to bear Dick Starboard, and double the head-lands, seaman like.

Ruelle. There, Sir, you are at your chamber-door.

Starb. Enough, enough, enough, I'll cast anchor

chor in Slumber-bay in less than half a glass.---Yo, ho, mess-mate, bear a hand, and don't forget the flip, d'ye hear. [Exit.

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT V. SCENE I.

SIR CHARLES and the COLONEL.

HA! ha! ha! ha! a pretty situation you had got into among the females; however, my discovery of the pretended Lord Frederic, has occasioned a considerable revolution in your countenance, Colonel.

Col. Ay, and in my heart too, Sir Charles; but I am impatient to know the method of your discovery.

Sir Cha. Know then I went in search of Lord Frederic, and being told he was gone to Lady Brainless's route, I followed; where I was so thoroughly mortified with an account of Lady Charlotte's marriage, that to collect my spirits, I retired and took a moon-light turn in the garden.

Col. A proper place, and fit season, for melancholy reflection.

Sir Cha. I had not been long there when her masquerading Ladyship, and Emmeline, came down a neighbouring walk, enjoying aloud the perplexity they had given us; encouraged by the subject, I drew near, and received conviction that your rival is no other than my mistress, who concluded with remarking, that she thought they had played upon us sufficiently.

Col. Yes, truly, I think they have; so long that I began to be most horridly out of tune---but
prithce

prithee what could be at the bottom of this Quixote scheme?

Sir Cha. To gain some assurance of our sincerity, which, after laughing at us a little, they seemed satisfied with.

Col. Dear Sir Charles, let me embrace you, so prudent and spirited a design makes the little gipsies ten times dearer than ever—did you let them know the discovery?

Sir Cha. Not for the world—I hastened from the garden, joined the company some minutes before them, shook off all concern, was unusually gay, and gallanted Lady Betty Ombre so warmly, that poor Lord Charles was, in his turn, utterly discontented.

Col. Ha! ha! ha! ha! bravissimo! that was turning the tables upon them with strict justice; and I think it would not be amiss to have a little more of it.

Sir Char. By all means, I sought you for that purpose, I am to call at Sir Scrapeall's this morning, and would have you drop in occasionally; for as the politicians play'd a double game into each others hands, it is but fit we should return like for like.

Col. With all my heart, it will be notable revenge; mischief on't had your discovery been made a little sooner it might have saved me five thousand pounds for ought I know.

Sir Char. What mean you?

Col. Why in the heat of my passion, I went to the Knight, made known my passion for Emmeline, and offered half her fortune for his consent.

Sir Char. Ha!—a substantial compliment to the Lady, Colonel, but we must try to settle matters otherwise—but come the hour calls me to the citizen's—I'll lead the van, do you bring up the rear.

Col. Fear not, I am ever punctual to my orders.
[*Exeunt.* K ENTER

ENTER LADY CHARLOTTE and EMMELINE.

Emme. Dear Lady Charlotte, I am concerned to see your natural vivacity so much disconcerted by a slight supposition.

L. Charlo. Slight supposition! alas, Emmeline, in your case you don't see with the eyes of love, else you would put another construction upon Sir Charles's behaviour.

Emme. I admit there was something extraordinary; but the feelings he confessed when you told him of the intended marriage were strong and sincere; the gaiety he afterwards assumed was, if I judge right, a slight veil occasionally thrown over a gloomy heart.

L. Brain. I can't think so—forced spirits are easily seen through, and such could never have carried him so far as to gallant that forward shallow piece of coquetry, Lady Betty.

Emme. There, I must acknowledge, he was somewhat mysterious.

L. Charlo. Would I had not taken this disguise, though it has been so far useful as to prove the sincerity of your lover, it has only purchased pain for me—I cannot blame Sir Charles—the fault is mine—I have acted like a foolish boy, who plays with and teizes a favourite bird, till breaking bondage, it takes wing never to be recalled; dear friend what step shall I take?

Emme. I would hope the best: still you know by appointment he will soon be here, sound him a little further and I dare believe he will yet fulfill my good opinion of him.

L. Charlo. I would indulge that hope, but strong doubts press forward to exclude it.

Emme. I see him coming, and shall leave you to a private conference. [Exit.]

ENTER

ENTER SIR CHARLES.

L. Charlo. Sir Charles good morning—I have, according to promise, prepared a letter for my sister Charlotte, wherein I have enlarged upon your previous pretensions as much as possible.

Sir Char. I am infinitely obliged to your Lordship; but upon second thought, I have determined not to offend Lady Charlotte by a visit.

L. Charlo. Your resolution so warmly urged is very soon changed, Sir.

Sir Char. Why, my Lord, upon cool deliberation, I think it better not to proceed any further in the affair; 'tis possible I might have interpreted the Lady's good nature too partially in my own favour; and as freedom of choice is undoubtedly just, it would be rude and cruel to interrupt her present scheme of happiness.

L. Charlo. You are of a very happy disposition, Sir Charles, that can so soon, and so coolly, reconcile an affair which seemed so interesting—

Sir Cha. Yes, my Lord, I am tolerably philosophical in these matters; besides, to own the truth, I had, amongst other conversation, talked so much of love to Lady Charlotte that I fancied our hearts engaged when there was nothing meant, I believe, but a little fashionable gallantry.

L. Charlo. Then all my fears are true; (*aside*) but suppose, Sir, my sister's affection should have been seriously engaged.

Sir Char. Nay, my Lord, she's too much a fine Lady to be in any danger that way—

ENTER COLONEL.

Colonel Parrapet your most humble servant.

Col. Sir Charles, yours: my Lord I kiss your hand.

L. Char. Sir, I don't think your behaviour and our last parting admit of such familiarity.

Col. Nay, my Lord, I came on purpose to solicit pardon; too free a glass had flustered my temper without the least intention of offence; acknowledgement of error is, I know, sufficient to a man of honour, but I must confess myself a little puzzled for an apology to this Lady.

ENTER EMMELINE.

Emme. Sir Charles, your servant—oh! the Colonel—may we hope that night and reflection, Sir, have given your thoughts a calm?

Col. Most certainly, madam, and I hope your good nature will grant indulgence to unlimited confession, especially as I am come to make all attonement possible by offering any assistance which may promote his Lordship's happiness and yours.

L. Charlo. So this swain is changed about too.

(*aside*)

Emme. Your condescension is very forward, Sir, but I presume his Lordship can take care of his own happiness without your assistance.

Col. Doubtless, madam—but if I could any way contribute——

Emme. Oh, Sir, you are exceeding liberal and courtly in your professions and promises, I can witness that.

Col. How so madam? for by your own declaration I never had the honour of promising or professing to you——

Emme. 'Tis no matter, Sir, but I believe if you had, you are very capable of forswearing it.

Col. Oh dear madam, I am sorry you have so terrible an opinion of me; but I perceive this subject grows too interesting—adso, I had almost forgot to tell you, Sir Charles, that I met Lady Betty Ombre just now, and to use her own phrase, she dies till she sees you.

L. Charlo.

L. Charlo. I shall go distracted. (*aside*)

Sir Char. Colonel I am obliged to you for delivering so kind a message; and from so accomplished a Lady; when your match with her sister Lady Frances is compleated; of friends we shall become brothers.

Emme. Confident! faithless wretches! (*aside*)

Col. That will be double pleasure; pray, madam, are you intimate with the family of the Ombre's

Emme. I don't know, I can't tell—insolent tormenting man. (*aside*)

Col. Your Lordship will be happy in an acquaintance there—Sir Charles will introduce you, and if your Lordship's choice was not already fixed upon this Lady, there is a third sister who has a most bewitching pair of eyes.

L. Charlo. I can hold no longer.

Sir Char. A very dangerous pair of sparklers, indeed, my Lord.

L. Charlo. Sir, you are a villain.

Emme. And, Sir, you are the worst of villains:

Sir Char. Amazing!

Col. Wonderful!

Emme. Oh that I were a man for justice sake.

L. Charlo. And I too.

Sir Char. And I too—what self betrayed, ha! ha! ha! this is more than I expected, and hastens the comedy to a conclusion—what think you ladies, have we ballanced the account of perplexity or not?

L. Charlo. Ladies!

Emme. What do you mean, Sir?

Sir Char. Nay, never look strange; your scheme was well laid, and had not chance directed me to a moon-light walk in the garden last night, we might have continued food for mirth at the expence of our peace.

Emme.

Emme. I am glad its no worse. (*aside*)

L. Charlo. I am so confus'd and so pleas'd, I know not what to say. (*aside*)

Sir Char. The palpitation of our hearts will, I hope, ladies, make this trespass on your patience appear excusable.

L. Charlo. Well, gentlemen, since it is in vain to deny, I admit your discovery, and cannot but acknowledge your treatment has been founded on strict justice.

Col. Spoke with your usual candour and generosity, lady Charlotte, and hence let mutual confidence ensue; as to you, madam, I have Sir Scrapeall's promise to make you mine.

L. Charlo. So! so! Here's counter-working—was it fair to undermine me; but pray how did you prevail upon the knight,

Col. By the rhetoric of five thousand pounds; that is, offering to surrender half the Lady's fortune.

Emme. Generous indeed!

Col. And had it been twenty times as much I should have only thought it a fit sacrifice to so much merit.

L. Charlo. An excellent proof of disinterested love, Colonel—but you are outbid, for I proposed to take the Lady without any fortune at all; and am to have the honest Citizen's written consent within.

Col. Contemptible reptile!

Sir Cha. Ha! ha! ha! ha! upon my honour, Colonel, you have been fairly outfoldiered, beat at your own weapons.

Emme. And poor I set up at auction to the best bidder.

L. Charlo. Ha! ha! ha! even so, Emmeline; but all for the better, I hope—oh! I see, Lady Brainless, I have some business with her in my
Lordly

Lordly capacity and shall beg of you to retire.

Sir Cha. You command us madam.

[*Exeunt Emme. Sir Cha. and Col.*]

L. Charlo. Now must I play a part severely kind in hopes of good effects, your Ladyship's most obedient.

ENTER LADY BRAINLESS.

My Lord, your humble servant,

L. Charlo. Your Ladyship had a bad run at cards last night.

L. Brain. Oh terrible! my Lord! it seemed as if fortune had determined to cross me.

L. Charlo. Were not such things common, madam, in matters of chance, they would press hard upon patience—I think your Ladyship lost fifteen hundred pounds? one thousand to me, and five hundred to Lord Robert Whist?

L. Brain. Thereabouts, I believe, my Lord.

L. Charlo. I am sorry to urge your Ladyship; but being myself a good deal out of cash at present, and having a bill of eight hundred to pay this forenoon, should be obliged to you for the trifle depending between us.

L. Brain. Really, my Lord, your demand takes me rather at a disadvantage.

L. Charlo. You know, madam, it is not like the impertinent bill of a troublesome mechanic for work done, or goods delivered, it is a debt of honour; and such you know, takes place of all other payments among people of fashion.

L. Brain. That's very true, my Lord, and I would always act up to the fashion, but inclination must give way where ability is totally wanting; and though Sir Scrapeall deals in cash I am almost as bare as if he was not worth a single shilling.

L. Charlo. If this be the case I find I ventured real against imaginary sums, and must therefore be more cautious of my company.

L. Brain.

L. Brain. Really, my Lord, there is much less politeness in that innuendo than I should have expected from a man of fashion.

L. Charlo. Politeness, madam, is very well upon particular occasions; but in gaming there is no such thing, we win of whom and when we can; like death, it cuts off all distinction of rank, relations and friends, and stakes must be paid, or persons exposed; but as your Ladyship is a fine woman matters should be made as easy as possible, and if—

L. Brain. If what, my Lord!

L. Charlo. I presume there could not be much love in your match with Sir Scrapeall—I have conceived a passion, give it suitable return, and let the thousand pounds—

L. Brain. Insolent man, no more; what part of my conduct, tho' perhaps ungarded, could encourage so gross an insult—gratify your malice, expose the sum due, and set me up the sport of laughing libertines, I'll bear all patiently, as the fruit and punishment of my own indiscretion, secure in this pleasing reflection, that tho' you publish my poverty you cannot taint my virtue.

L. Charlo. Come, come, madam, Colonel Parapet would have received a gentler answer.

L. Brain. No, my Lord, there you are mistaken also; for though that gentleman may have been allowed a particular intimacy, and may have improved or misconstrued appearances, he must be a consummate villain if ever he dropped a prejudicial insinuation; for let me say to you, to him, and all the world, that however I have dipped into follies, the vices of life could never make me a profelyte.

L. Charlo. 'Tis as I always thought, dear Lady Brainless, these just and noble sentiments force off false appearances, and reveal me, instead of a gaming

ing Lord, your disinterested and inviolable friend Charlotte Bloom.

L. Brain. Lady Charlotte! why then this disguise! or why would friendship alarm such painful sensations.

L. Charlo. As to the motive of this appearance you shall know in due time—why I have wounded your delicate feeling was to awaken a sense of what you justly call follies, which have long obscured many valuable qualifications, and subjected you to the reproach of several who have less real merit, but more external caution.

L. Brain. Dear Lady Charlotte, I shall be ever debtor to your kind opinion and friendly design; reflection tells me I have given too just cause for censure, yet not without some plea of justification.

L. Charlo. I am certain of it, your most disproportionate marriage, if not an entire excuse, is at least a powerful palliation.

L. Brain. Marriage; there you have said all at once, those who should have studied and judged better for my future happiness warmly urged the match; young and unexperienced I was, allured by the hopes of a title, and unlimited command; ever since I have been almost hourly rendered unhappy by the selfish and perverse temper of Sir Scrapeall, which has occasioned me to despise and cross him in every particular; and most of my extravagancies have been more calculated for killing time, than any pleasure—pity me, dear Charlotte, for I find my scheme of life widely different from what I wish, and yet in self defence I am obliged to follow it; when avarice, jealousy, and discord prevail at home, peace must be sought abroad.

L. Charlo. I have no reason to doubt your friendship—but tell me, did the Colonel use any freedom with my character?

L

L. Charlo.

L. Charls. No, upon my honour, what I hinted was from observation last night ; and repeated to alarm you, tho' I sincerely believe you meant nothing.

L. Brain. Your interpretation, my friend, is kind and just ; I own my horrid situation made me fond of his engaging conversation ; and female vanity was flattered in some compliments he passed upon me, nothing more, I assure you, and yet, now I look back, such gallant trifling is like sporting on the unstedfast margin of a lucid stream, where while we admire the beautiful reflection in its liquid bosom, one false step hurries us to certain destruction.

L. Charls. Your similitude, my friend, is fancifully just ; but we are too grave, Sir Charles, the Colonel and Emmeline are but in the next room, shall we join them and prattle away gloomy ideas.

L. Brain. Excuse me for the present, dear Lady Charlotte, the reflections you have awakened render my spirits unfit for conversation, therefore give me leave to retire—think for me, gentle friend, and if any means can be found to free from, or alleviate my bondage, I promise that future conduct shall prove my errors the effect of disagreeable circumstances ; of a tormented, but not a dishonest heart. [Exit.

L. Charls. How good a heart may inadvertently be led into unfavourable appearance ?

ENTER SIR CHARLES COLONEL and EMMELINE.

Emme. Knowing your design. Lady Charlotte, I ventured to make these gentlemen ear witnesses of the work of reformation, and they admire it vastly.

L. Charls. I am glad of it ; and hope you will all join to set her Ladyship free.

Col. Sdeath ! if there be no other method I'll chuck old cent. per cent. out of the window and her t liberty that way.

L. Charls.

L. Charlo. Come, come, I hope to effect it by some less furious means—I'll step to him for a few minutes. [Exit.

Sir Char. Hey-day! what have we here?

Col. As I live, mother Busy, and my man Fusee—married, I hope.

ENTER MRS. BUSY and FUSEE.

Mrs. B. Sir Charles, your most humble servant—Emmeline, how dost do child?

Col. And pray, madam, why am I left out of the catalogue of compliments.

Mrs. B. You! marry come up! indeed I wonder you have assurance to look me in the face after such behaviour, I should have been prettily off; indeed, if I had depended upon your fine speeches and palav'ring—I should have been a fine laughing truly, for all the coxcombs and gill flirts; but I'd have you know, Mr. Colonel, grown birds are not to be caught with chaff, no, no, I saw through all your designs.

Col. Designs! madam! what could you see but the most faithful, the most ardent passion; but I suppose you tax me with inconstancy to justify your own falshood, and will give yourself away to blast all my hopes.

Mrs. B. Ah, that wheedling tongue, and that deceitful face, if my virtue had not been impregnable, if I had not been as cold as ice to unlawful love, I don't know what might have been the consequence; but as I am not to be imposed upon; I know the world, and the difference of people—Captain Spontoon, my husband, has heard your baseness.

Col. How! husband!—ah cruel fair—are you then married.

Mrs. B. Yes, truly, Sir—perhaps you thought I could not get a match; but the Captain has dis-

cernment—you might have made your market, Sir, but now'tis too late.

Col. Then, animosity aside, I wish you joy with all my heart; and hope Fufee may make you a good husband.

Sir Char. and Emme. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. B. Fufee! and who's that pray?

Col. A very honest fellow I assure you, madam, my servant that was, and your lord and master that is—how long have you been a Captain, Fufee?

Fufee. Not much above four and twenty hours, Sir.

Sir Char. Col. and Emme. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. B. What can all this mean?—how, Sir! are you no Captain?

Fufee No truly, not at present—but I will be one if you'll buy me a commission, my charming dear,

Mrs. B. Buy you a halter, my roguish dear.

Sir Char. Col. and Emme. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. B. What am I tricked then? has neighbour Sly imposed on me?

Emme. Oh no, madam, you are not to be imposed upon—you know the world, and the difference of people, ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. B. Hold your tongue, huffy, must such a minx as you set up your face?

Col. Nay, good madam, don't be in a passion, it discomposes your beauty—a bride, and frown—oh fie.

Sir Char and Emme. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. B. They provoke me so I don't know what to say or do—married to his servant! well you are pleased to be mighty merry, good folks—but I am not the first that has been deceived, nor shan't be the last—as for you, Colonel, I'll let your character be known; and this fellow I can be revenged of at any time; for if I throw myself into the river my jointure goes with me, so there's tit for tat, and bite for bite, he! he! he! *[runs off]*

Col.

Col. Follow your Lady, Fufee, she'll come too when she can't help herself.

Fufee. I'll do what I can, Sir, for sake of the money; but if she should resolve upon a lover's leap e'en let her go, for truly I begin to think her service will prove harder duty than the brown musket and six-pence a day. [Exit.

C.L. Well, madam, I think her insolence to you is pretty well repaid.

Emme. Thoroughly, as I could wish.

Sir Char. Nothing but strict justice on your own account, for she was most abominably troublesome—here comes Lady Charlotte and the Knight.

ENTER SIR SCRAPEALL and LADY CHARLOTTE.

Sir Scr. Well, my Lord, upon signing the paper I sent you to peruse; you shall have my consent to marry her in writing.

Col. Sir Scrapeall, your very humble servant.

Sir Scr. How! my scarlet friend! what shall I say to him? (*aside*) your servant, Sir.

Col. Well, Sir Scrapeall, the young Lady agrees to your consent in my favour.

Sir Scr. Consent, Sir! ay, but—

L. Charlo. How, Sir! have you been in treaty with another?

Sir Scr. In treaty!

Col. Another! why, Sir, did not you promise me your consent on abating half the Lady's fortune?

L. Char. Nay, Colonel, but I abate the whole of her fortune.

Emme. Hey day! guardian! have you set me up to public sale?

Col. I shall depend upon your word, Sir Scrapeall.

L. Charlo. And I shall positively insist upon my claim.

Sir Scr. You are very peremptory, gentlemen; but suppose—

suppose I won't consent to either, what then—as to you, Colonel, I don't think your fortune sufficient, and for you my Lord—keep our bargain and you shall have my consent to run away with her to Scotland. (*aside*)

L. Char. Ha! ha! ha! a very honest and generous proposal, indeed, Sir Knight, but—a word in your ear, I have more occasion for a husband than a wife.

Sir Scr. What! a husband!

Sir Char. Yes Sir, that I'll testify.

Sir Scr. How! are not you a Lord then?

L. Charlo. No Sir, but I am a Lady by courtesy.

Sir Scr. What the mischief, women turned into men; I have long scrupled to believe my ears, and now I shan't chuse to trust my eyes—well, Colonel, I shall consider your proposals.

L. Charlo. Nay, Sir, it shall be settled now, and—draw this way—not only give your consent but the Lady's whole fortune, or I'll make you repent it.

Sir Scr. make me repent it—I defy you, Sir—madam, I mean.

L. Charlo. Softly, Sir, you sent me a paper to peruse.

Sir scr. And what then?

L. Charlo. You thought it was a release for that Lady's fortune; but listen to the title—directions for John Ringbolt, master of the ship Peggy, to run her ashore, she being insured at treble value--

Sir Scr. Oh that blundering dog, my clerk (*aside*) well, Colonel, since I believe you'll make the girl a good husband, and she is willing, I shall give my consent.

L. Charlo. Ay, Sir, but it must be done in due form; and now as your Lady has many just causes of complaint, to prevent the trouble, scandal, and expence of a public divorce, she proposes a voluntary separation.

Sir Scr.

Sir Scr. With all my heart, I'll resign all title to her—let her march as soon as she pleases.

L. Charlo. And take her whole fortune with her.

Sir Scra. No, no, I did not say that neither.

L. Charlo. What I must consult the insurers, must I. (*aside*)

Sir Scra. Oh—h—h—no, I'll do what you have a mind.

L. Charlo. Well gentlemen and ladies, I call upon you as witnesses, that Sir Scrapeall agrees to a separation proposed by his Lady, and is so generous as to return her whole fortune.

Sir Scra. Ay, all but the two thousand pounds her extravagance cost me.

L. Charlo. Oh, the insurers shall settle that point. (*aside.*)

Sir Scra. I shall certainly run mad—stark staring mad—if it was not for the hopes that brother Starboard will drink himself dead in a month, and make me his heir, I could never hold out.

Starb. (without) Who's aboard, yo, ho.

Sir Cha. What naval greeting's that ?

Emme. By the harmony of expression it should be Sir Scrapeall's delicate brother-in-law.

ENTER STARBOARD and RUELLE, arm in arm.

Starb. (singing) And Moll, and Kate, and Nancy shall roll in lous d'ors.—What cheer, what cheer, messmates ? why brother Brainless, your poop always carries a signal of distress ; what have you been in a gale since I saw you ? mess, I have sailed through the channel of courtship twelve knots an hour, and made the harbour of matrimony with my little snow half a glass since.

Sir Scra. How ! what ! not married, I hope ?

Starb. I don't know what you call married, but I showed the parson a coquet to clear out of the canonical custom-house ; he clapped on his uniform

form, read grace, spliced our hands, and launched us off to swing in a hammock together.

Sir Cha. Bravely said, honest captain.

Emme. Mrs. Ruelle I heartily wish you joy.

Ruelle. I am obliged to you, madam.

Starb. Av, ay, thank you, thank you, young woman, the same to you when you steer the like course.

Sir Scra. I profess I am astonished!

Starb. And why so, forsooth? is not she a tight built thing?

Sir Scra. Well, since it is so, I desire you to pay me for the punch and eatables you and your followers have devoured, and the things you have broke.

Starb. Pay! blow me up then this here ship of yours is no better than a bum-boat; so d'ye see, order us a good bucket of rumbo, make your bill, and we'll pay all together—a light heart, &c. (*sings*)

[*Goes off with Ruelle.*]

Sir Scra. Oh mercy on me! I must follow the mad bear to see he does no more mischief. [*Exit.*]

Sir Cha. Ha! ha! ha! what a rueful condition is the poor Knight in.

Col. Deservedly—madam you have negotiated and distributed justice with most commendable impartiality.

L. Charlo. The pleasing effects are amply rewarded, Colonel.

Sir Cha. And now, my friend, it remains to perfect our own happiness, which has cost us so much anxiety in the pursuit.

Col. But will, in the hands of these ladies, more than repay it all; for how pleasing soever the irregular sallies of dissipation may be, I doubt not but we shall be perfectly and happily convinced

That human kind no equal bliss can prove,
To the chaste raptures of connubial love.

F I N I S.